




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Lockhart River

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.01 am): Two weeks ago I visited Lockhart River, 800 kilometres north of Cairns, in my capacity as ministerial champion for that community. I was joined by the hardworking member for Cook and Director-General Warwick Agnew. We caught up with Mayor Wayne Butcher, who estimates the community's first-dose COVID vaccination rate is now over 80 per cent. This is a credit to the Director of Nursing up there, Josh Stafford, and his staff, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, and Mayor Butcher's factually-driven community campaign to make sure Lockhart River locals understand the importance of getting vaccinated.

As always, I was blown away by the council's impressive work, like the cultural dance grounds they are developing, the new airport terminal funded by this government and the Lockhart Social Club—projects fostering community spirit. I was pleased to see council road crews hard at work preparing for the wet season. Mayor Wayne Butcher is committed to employing and skilling local workers. Council now owns most of their own equipment and rely a lot less on outside contractors. This includes a recently acquired concrete batching plant. When they use contractors, council leases them the gear and sees the full economic benefit for their community. To the whole community, I thank them from the bottom of my heart for their hospitality and for working with me.

I could not visit Cape York without driving the Peninsula Developmental Road back to Cairns. This \$237.5 million stage 2 upgrade, secured by the Palaszczuk Labor government, will see 55 kilometres more of the PDR sealed, along with an additional 72 kilometres of community access roads to First Nations communities in the cape, boosting safety, improving connections between remote communities and supporting increased tourism year after year.

There is no better example of the Palaszczuk Labor government's support of First Nations procurement than the Cape York Region Package. At the Merluna to York Downs site I met Ralph, Bradley and Jyroz—locals working with First Nation Bama Civil and Downer joint venture to seal the road near the Aurukun turn-off. Ralph is an Aurukun elder who recently started working with Bama on this project. Ralph showed up at the site office one day to see if they needed a hand, and Bama were only too happy to hire him on the project. Ralph is now a vital part of the team.

Finally, I came down the Peninsula Developmental Road to Cairns, stopping in Mareeba where I met Mayor Angela Toppin to talk about boosting the area's vaccination rates. While there is still some way to go, I am pleased to see that the first jab rate in Mareeba has jumped 20 per cent in the last month and moves closer to the state average each day. The message is clear: getting vaccinated is the best way to reunite families for Christmas and drive our economic recovery. The message is: don't make summer drab, get the jab.