




Speech By
Michael Healy

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Cairns, Wharf Construction; Cairns Marine Precinct

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (2.32 pm): One of the Palaszczuk government's election commitments of \$30 million to construct two new wharfs for the Port of Cairns is well and truly underway. One of these new wharfs will be located at Smith's Creek and the other at Commercial Fishing Base 2. These two new wharfs will expand the present capacity of the Port of Cairns to carry out in-water maintenance on vessels used by both the Australian Defence Force and Australian Border Force. Not only will these wharfs increase maintenance capacity; they will also in the short-term create 150 jobs in the building of these wharfs along with creating longer term employment opportunities that will come with the expansion of the Cairns Marine Precinct, which is a commitment this government has given, as I have, to the people of Cairns. I also note at this stage that it was announced last week that Ports North, a statutory government body, had secured 2.8 hectares of land in Ports North to support the planned expansion of the Cairns Marine Precinct.

These two new wharfs will also provide opportunities for local and regional suppliers, contractors, service providers and the wider business community which has been severely impacted by COVID-19. This funding also covers a business case to identify how to build this initial investment and grow and develop this precinct as a key centre for the maintenance and repair of large Defence vessels and naturally taking advantage of the strategic geographical location of Cairns. This business case will also investigate the manufacture of commercial vessels required for servicing the region, which would bring more jobs, not to mention the opportunities presented by the ever-growing superyacht presence in our waters.

The existing skilled workforce, contractor base and infrastructure within the Cairns Marine Precinct allows opportunities not only for more vessel maintenance but also to explore the possibility of Cairns returning to its legacy of vessel building. This work is vital to ensure Cairns is well positioned to take advantage of future marine maintenance, repair and overhaul work. We know it is absolutely fundamental that we need to diversify our economy. Tourism is excellent, but we do need to see significant diversification.

The initiative aligns with the Palaszczuk government's Defence Industries 10-Year Roadmap and Action Plan which focuses on growing employment capability in the state and supporting Queensland defence industry firms to access new opportunities to create new jobs. Engineering, design and advisory company Aurecon Australasia Pty Ltd has started work on the Cairns Marine Precinct early works and construction tender documents. This important project is vital for our marine precinct, which will be built on the new wider and deeper shipping channel which was successfully completed by this government in 2020. A separate master planning process is also due to be completed by the end of October 2021. We are moving ahead with the diversification of our economy.