




Speech By
Hon. Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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ADJOURNMENT

Townsville

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (7.22 pm): I rise to talk about the great year it has been for my home town of Townsville. The global pandemic has made for an unpredictable 12 months, but Townsville has a resilient community and we have taken the situation in our stride. Not only has Townsville ridden the bumps that the roller-coaster of a pandemic has thrown at us; our economy is thriving.

As a proud local member of parliament and member of the Palaszczuk government there have been so many highlights from the year that I could talk about that it is hard to pick a favourite. However, the Townsville State of Origin match was certainly unforgettable. It was a spectacular event that showcased the Queensland Country Bank Stadium and Townsville to millions of people not only around Australia but around the world. Just ask any footy fan in Townsville: it is the centre of the Rugby League universe. The Palaszczuk Labor government bringing Origin to the city only cemented that, member for Cairns.

In addition to events, our government continues to invest in major infrastructure projects in Townsville. We are investing in the job-creating \$232 million channel upgrade at the Port of Townsville. The project will support our emerging hydrogen industry and the resources sector, particularly in growing our new economy minerals sector. Our government is actively supporting that sector in the north and this year approved Queensland's first vanadium mine. Only last week I welcomed the Treasurer to Townsville to announce that our government will build and own a common-user vanadium processing plant in the city.

Along with the member for Mundingburra and the member for Thuringowa, as resources minister I know how important the North West Minerals Province is for Townsville, which is why we are backing it. The reason Townsville's economy has grown is because of our health response to the global pandemic. People have done the right thing, following health directives and getting vaccinated.

Just last month I went to Palm Island with 'the Hammer', Cowboys and Maroons star Hamiso Tubai-Fidow, to promote the importance of getting vaccinated. It encouraged locals to get the jab when they saw a role model like the Hammer on Palm Island. It was hammer time!

One nurse was nearly in tears when three girls from the Bwgc Colman Community School got their jab after speaking with the Hammer. For months she had been encouraging them. It was really inspiring to play a tiny part in ensuring that those girls are now protected against COVID-19. As a government we will continue to make sure that everyone knows the importance of getting vaccinated as it will help our economy recover and it will keep the people of Townsville safe.