




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Regional Forums

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.08 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government is a government for all Queenslanders. That was certainly on display earlier this month when I headed out west to Longreach to attend the regional forums. These forums and our engagement with the regions drives results in regional Queensland. This comes from open and productive two-way communication between regional communities and this government.

When I first became the minister I met with the mayor of Barcaldine while visiting Western Queensland. He told me all about how the cluster fencing where they live—which we funded—revived the sheep industry in that area. I reported that back to the Premier, and not long after that she announced a further round of funding for this fantastic initiative. While I was in Blackall recently travelling around with the local mayor I got to see some of that cluster fencing and hear firsthand how it has been so successful in those regions.

While I was out in the regions again last year mayors reported to me that they are facing challenges finding important water infrastructure for their communities, and once again this government listened. I came back to Brisbane and ensured that a centrepiece of our budget was a further round of Building our Regions funding provided exactly for this purpose. The Treasurer and Premier acted. They delivered \$70 million over the next three years for local governments to improve their water supply and sewerage services. Previous rounds of Building our Regions funding have seen more than \$348 million approved for hundreds of projects, creating nearly 3,000 construction jobs—all in regional Queensland. Under the first stage of Building our Regions round 6, a total of \$8.3 million has been awarded to 23 local councils from up in the Torres Strait down to Goondiwindi for projects that will improve liability and long-term prosperity for regional communities.

It was fantastic to meet with Barcoo mayor Sally O’Neil on my trip out west recently and tell her in person over a nice cold beer at the Birdcage bar that her council had been successful in round 6, receiving \$248,000 to plan upgrades to the Jundah water treatment plant. The program will now move into phase 2, with this year’s budget allocating \$39 million for councils to deliver on critical infrastructure in regional Queensland. I look forward to making more announcements very shortly about these construction projects moving forward. It is the Palaszczuk Labor government that you can count on to deliver for regional Queensland, to make sure there are good jobs and better services for everyone no matter where you live in this great state.