




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Building our Regions

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.07 am): I recently had the pleasure of writing to 38 regional councils across Queensland to let them know that they had been successful in applying for a share of the \$70 million Building our Regions round 6 grants. Since then I have been able to get on the phone with a number of mayors located right across the state, and the message from each is the same: they would not be able to do this critical work if it were not for the Palaszczuk Labor government.

These local councils now have funding to undertake 50 new water supply and sewerage construction projects, particularly in regional Queensland, that will deliver real and substantial benefits to all of those communities. This comes off the back of our announcement in June this year when we awarded 23 small regional councils almost \$8.3 million to carry out more than 35 planning jobs to get them ready for these funding rounds. The latest 55 construction projects, together with 35 planning projects, will be vital to the people and local governments throughout regional Queensland. Not only that; they will help create good, solid jobs and improve the livability of our wonderful Queensland communities.

We on this side of the House know that planning and feasibility projects must happen, because they guide measured investment decisions. Building our Regions understandably has strong support from mayors and the Local Government Association of Queensland because these funding programs are practical and they deliver real and meaningful help to councils that otherwise might not be able to find the money in their budgets.

Under this announcement, the Burdekin shire will receive \$2 million to undertake earthworks on a macroalgae wastewater treatment plant that is the first of its kind in the world. It is going to revolutionise the way that coastal councils treat wastewater. People are moving to our regional areas in droves and it is critical that water and sewerage infrastructure keeps up with population growth. In many cases, these grants are the difference between project viability and deferral, and we know this program works. To date, including round 6, the Building our Regions program has committed almost \$416 million in funds for more than 360 projects across 68 local government areas in regional Queensland. The program has leveraged close to \$610 million in additional funding from other sources, bringing the total program expenditure to more than \$1 billion, and even more importantly supporting more than 3,000 construction jobs during that time. The Palaszczuk Labor government is a government for all Queenslanders and I look forward to visiting each of these councils in the future to see how our support is making their lives a lot better in regional Queensland.