



Speech By
Michael Healy

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Cairns Convention Centre

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (2.27 pm): The \$176 million expansion of the Cairns Convention Centre is now coming to an end. This expansion has supported up to 570 full-time construction jobs, with 896 workers being inducted onsite to date and 685 of those workers being locals. There have been 80 businesses engaged in the extended supply chain, with 54 of them being local businesses. There have been a total of 66,000 training hours recorded with over 41,000 completed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers. Indeed 10 per cent of the workforce of the centre identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, which is terrific news.

Other statistics include the fact that there was 106 trade packages awarded, 71 per cent of those went to local Cairns businesses, and 55 apprenticeships were conducted onsite, which is really positive news. Investing in training local apprentices obviously helps leave a legacy of more qualified workers in the Far North. As you can see by these figures, this expenditure by the Labor government has injected a massive boost into the Cairns economy. Not only has this project supported hundreds of local jobs, it also means more dollars for the local tourism industry because they are able to host more events sooner.

Once completed, the Cairns Convention Centre will boast an additional 10,500 square metres which will include a large undercover, tropically planted drop-off entry forecourt, an expanded main entry lobby, a 410-seat plenary lecture space, three 120-seat meeting rooms, new exhibition space for up to 30 display booths, and the 500-seat Sky Terrace with spectacular views over Trinity Inlet.

I want to acknowledge the centre's general manager, Janet Hamilton, and her staff who continue to do an amazing job. They have been keeping the facility running while a lot of this work has been underway. They have hosted some fairly large events, whether it be the bull riders, the professional bull riders' invitational or the Australian and New Zealand Metabolic and Obesity Surgery Society conference—many and varied—not to mention a Guy Sebastian concert thrown in there also. As well, the centre played a huge role as a vaccination hub during the push to get Queenslanders protected against the COVID-19 virus.

The new-look centre is expected to inject an additional \$50 million a year into our local economy, as well as provide local jobs in a wide range of areas including hospitality, logistics, security and maintenance. This will be a world-class events destination with the potential to draw an additional 20,000 visitors to the Far North each year. The world-class Cairns Convention Centre is everything you would expect from an international purpose-built venue located amongst nature's most pristine playground, and we look forward to welcoming you all in May of this year.