



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Cairns Electorate, Palaszczuk Labor Government

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (2.51 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise as the member for Cairns to talk about some of the significant achievements of the Palaszczuk Labor government since I was lucky enough to be elected in 2017. We only have to look around where we are today to see projects such as the \$176 million expansion of the Cairns Convention Centre, which obviously honourable members are enjoying this week. Once it is completed the Cairns Convention Centre will boast an additional 10,500 square metres that will include a large undercover tropically planted drop-off entry forecourt and expanded main entry lobby, a 410-seat plenary lecture space, three 120-seat meeting rooms, a new exhibition space for up to 30 displays, and a 500-seat sky terrace with spectacular views over Trinity Inlet.

One of the key things those on the other side do not recognise is what a key economic driver this facility is. This was built by a Labor government and it is being refurbished by a Labor government. In its early days it generated around \$80 million a year. Upon completion this will generate around \$120 million a year, which is a significant investment. I was talking to the people who run this fantastic event. If you have a look at the numbers, that is 11,500 room nights just next month. That is people going to the reef, people hiring cars, people staying in hotels and going to restaurants, bars, pubs and clubs. This is one of the key economic drivers. It is fantastic.

There is no denying that, when we talk about juvenile crime, Cairns has faced some serious challenges. The police minister was trying to talk through the rabble and notify people who have made an effort to come and listen to a few facts as opposed to turmoil and speculative emotion. Our plan is to put on 2,025 extra police by 30 June 2025. That is 150 extra police here in Cairns which are desperately needed. We also know that in January of this year we opened up a new police facility in West Cairns where eight uniformed officers are stationed. We have also delivered new mobile beat vans in the Far North. These vans can get out into communities and interact with people, which is fundamental. In addition, there was a \$10 million refurbishment of the Cairns police station and \$4 million for the McLeod Street police facility. We continue to invest.

I want to talk about the schools we are investing in. Since I was elected in 2017, \$93.4 million has been invested in school infrastructure in my electorate alone. Those of you who turned up this morning to the Clontarf event at Cairns State High School would have seen that hall. It is spectacular. We are investing in our children's future. Trinity Bay received a new two-storey secondary learning centre with 12 new learning spaces, two design studios and two robotic laboratories. This is essential. This is what we need to provide for our children as we move into the future. The Cairns School of Distance Education also has six new classrooms and Cairns West State School has six new general learning areas. Edge Hill State School is getting a new admin block, the school is being repainted and we put in extra car parking facilities. I regularly meet with principals around not just high schools but also primary schools. They have been a very strong focus of mine.

We have invested significantly in the tourism industry ever since COVID and we continue to invest. We know that what makes our destination most popular is people getting off a plane at the airport. We know that 87 per cent of our tourists get off an airplane. In the best years we are around about 2.8 million people, with 87 per cent getting off a plane. If that airport is bumpy, so is our economy. We continue to invest. Over \$200 million has been invested. We have some fantastic announcements in relation to Jetstar Bali and Jetstar Osaka. We are talking about Air Niugini. We have seen some terrific announcements with Virgin coming out of the Japanese market, which has been a fundamental investor in the Cairns region. If you have any understanding of the history of our region, you look around at the significant investment.

We continue to put money into our marine precinct. As we heard yesterday, we are putting over \$16 million into our marine college, which is a spectacular investment in our future. In the arts we have put \$15 million into the Cairns contemporary arts area, working with the regional council. We have our marine college, which I talked about. We continue to spend hundreds of millions of dollars in our hospital. Unfortunately, time has run out. We are making significant investments in this beautiful part of the world.