




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Cairns Marine Precinct, Investment; Cairns TAFE

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (2.43 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker Lui, it is great to see you. I believe that the last time I spoke you were in the chair and it is good to see you there again.

I want to touch on some of the things that were announced when we were in Cairns. In the intervening period I have had the opportunity to reflect on some of them and, more importantly, to talk to people who will be involved in some of the initiatives. As we know, the Palaszczuk government is committing \$27 million to road and bridge upgrades to give shipyards direct access to the Cairns Marine Precinct common user facility. A \$12 million fund will be established to revamp facilities at local shipyards. This is set to enhance the Cairns Marine Precinct as the premier marine hub, creating and supporting more than 4,600 jobs.

Cairns is continuing to grow. It has always had a big tourism industry, which is a big employer. However, we need to diversify our economy and these significant investments are doing that. Without a doubt, the announcement of our investment in the Cairns Marine Precinct will cement its future as a marine maintenance leader, with a \$39 million injection for road and bridge infrastructure and upgrades to local shipyards. It will fund 1.2 kilometres of road upgrades, which will increase capacity as vessels of various sizes will be able to be picked up and moved on public roads to various warehouses. I think that is absolutely fantastic.

What is more important is the feedback from the operators that we will be working with: Norship, Tropical Reef Shipyard and Austal Queensland. Those operators are big employers and they are looking for apprentices and young workers. As I said, they employ 4,600 people, with more to come. Those operators have been absolutely buoyed by this announcement. The new infrastructure will include two wharfs and a common user facility to further enhance their capabilities. The directors of each of those companies have been extremely pleased with the decision and they recognise the importance of our investment.

As Minister Farmer touched on today, Saturday two weeks ago together we attended a marine tourism event, which was absolutely fantastic. There were significant crowds, with mums and dads and their kids. We are spending \$16 million to expand TAFE Queensland's Great Barrier Reef International Marine College at Cairns. It is an incredibly busy college and we are expanding it. Not only that: TAFE Queensland and the college will partner with Maritime Safety Queensland to offer a Certificate III in Maritime Operations (Integrated Rating), which until now has been available only in Tasmania, Newcastle and Perth. Saturday two weeks ago I took my 15-year-old son to the event. He has strong intentions of getting into the marine industry, whether it be through tourism, superyachts, grey boats and so on. We have the infrastructure, we are investing in it and the industry is continuing to grow. The expansion of the college will be delivered by Queensland's very own QBuild and will support up to 37 jobs, which is absolutely fantastic. There is no doubt about it: significant investment from both the state

and federal governments into the Cairns Marine Precinct is absolutely fundamental to ensuring that we can provide sustainable career pathways to the young people of Cairns and that we continue to support the ongoing and important diversification of our economy.

Work has also started on the \$4 million Cairns TAFE Advanced Manufacturing Skills Lab to deliver more first-class training in state-of-the-art facilities. We are investing in our future. We are investing in our children. The refurbishments will include specific automation and robotics labs to support high-end manufacturing through augmented reality and activation spaces, automation and robotics. The construction of the new facilities is well underway and we understand that the training programs are being put in place. The Cairns TAFE Advanced Manufacturing Skills Lab will be a major upgrade and will include an electrical lab and a mixed virtual reality room. This is important because as we invest in industries we need to also invest in training and to ensure that we are investing in essential infrastructure.

That is how you build a diversified economy. That is how you create jobs. That is how you give your region and, more importantly, your kids a sustainable future so that they can invest not only in their own futures but also in their town, their city and their region of Far North Queensland. Importantly, we do not want to see our kids moving south; we want them to stay in our part of the world where they can grow, learn, gain great jobs and make significant investments. This is a wonderful investment by the Palaszczuk government.