




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): I am very pleased to announce that the Palaszczuk Labor government's \$176 million commitment to expand the Cairns Convention Centre has been completed. I want to acknowledge the work of the Queensland government and the commitment in particular of the Minister for Public Works for his advocacy. It is an absolute asset. It is owned by the people of Queensland through the Queensland government and it will be a legacy for years to come. This is a world-class facility and it will remain a significant economic driver for our region. As well as that, during its building over a thousand jobs were supported, and the project has well and truly delivered.

We have an additional 10,500 square metres, allowing multiple events to take place concurrently which we could not do in the past; 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; a new exhibition space for up to 30 display booths, which are vitally important; and a 500-seat sky terrace with views over Trinity Inlet. We have built a world-class convention and exhibition centre on the doorstep of Queensland's two World Heritage listed arenas—the Great Barrier Reef and the Daintree Rainforest and catchment area. The Cairns Convention Centre is, as I said, owned by us—the people of Queensland—and managed by ASM Global under the local leadership of Janet Hamilton. I want to sincerely thank Janet and her team for their cooperation and communication throughout the delivery of this project.

Refurbishment started in 2020 and careful steps were taken to ensure that anchor tenants like the Cairns Taipans were not displaced or interrupted. Already 2,500 delegates are expected through the doors this year alone—with more than five events, including DestinationQ and the Queensland Tourism Awards during Tourism Week next month. We anticipate more than 35,000 visitations to the Cairns region will be generated by people travelling to attend events at the Cairns Convention Centre generating over \$100 million.

A project of this magnitude was not immune to the challenges of the global pandemic, including supply chain constraints and labour shortages, but I want to make the point that the Palaszczuk Labor government delivered the project within the scope of the budget forecast back in 2016. I also want to make special note and thank the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Hon. Curtis Pitt, who announced funding for this vitally important funding when he was Treasurer. I recognise his very important input into this. Only strong Labor governments could have forecast and delivered this project within budget and I am proud to be part of those collective efforts. This is a key economic driver for our community and something we are all very proud of.