



Speech By  
**Les Walker**


**MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 February 2024

**TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (2.17 pm): I rise to speak to the report *Inquiry into the Peninsula Developmental Road (Laura to Weipa) Project*. Firstly, I thank my fellow committee members for their work on this report. I did not get to go on the tour. I could not make it—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr WALKER:** It is not a bad thing. There are only so many days in a week to do all of the things that a state member has to do. I acknowledge my fellow committee members: chair Shane King, the member for Kurwongbah, who has moved on to the role of Assistant Minister for Clean Economy Jobs; and deputy chair Lachlan Millar, member for Gregory, who has also moved on but who did a great job. I thank him for his service. Bryson Head is still on the committee. James Martin has since moved on to two other committees. He is sadly missed, but I thank the member for Stretton for his work. Trevor Watts and Pat Weir were also on the committee. Pat has been in and out but is back with us briefly as well. I thank the committee secretariat, Jodhi and Zac, for their great work and thank others who assisted with this report and did an excellent job.

The executive summary of the Transport and Resources Committee's report No. 33 of the 57th Parliament states—

2 Background and scope of the project

2.1 Background

The Peninsula Developmental Road ... is the main road transport link within Cape York and between the Peninsula and the rest of the Australian mainland. The Cape is home to approximately 18,000 residents of which over two-thirds identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. It is one of the most remote areas of Australia and experiences significant disadvantage.

The PDR is a state-controlled road and historically, much of it has been unsealed, severely corrugated and significantly impacted during the annual wet season. Saturation and flooding has resulted in the road being closed for up to four months per year, which then causes remote communities that rely on the road to become isolated.

While a commercial barge service operates to certain locations in Cape York, the committee heard evidence that this transport option can be costly and that there may be extended timeframes to send and receive freight and supplies via this alternate route when the PDR is inoperable.

In January 2014 the Federal Government announced a five-year, \$210 million funding package aimed at improving infrastructure in Cape York. This commitment stated—

"The Cape York Region package will look to upgrade key access roads in the region to ensure they are able to withstand severe weather conditions. This will keep those roads open for longer during the annual wet season and underpin stronger local economies and better services for locals."

## 2.2 Project overview

The Cape York Region Package (CYRP) was initially a five-year, \$260.5 million program of works jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments. While the focus of the CYRP was sealing sections of the PDR, other components of the package included:

- Indigenous community infrastructure work (\$50.5 million)
- Endeavour Valley Road sealing works (\$10 million).

This original funding package covered the period from 2014-15 to 2018-19 and is referred to as CYRP1 ... In 2018, the program funding was increased by \$15.5 million to a total of \$276 million.

The committee has concluded that the work is suitable for its purpose; the work was necessary and advisable; the work was reasonable value for money; the costs of the work was reasonable; the work has had a positive impact on the community, the economy and the environment; the procurement method for the work was suitable; and the balance of public and private sector involvement in the work was satisfactory. The committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly note the contents of this report. I commend to the House report No. 33 of the 57th Parliament of the Transport and Resources Committee, dated April 2023.