



Speech By  
**Hon. Brent Mickelberg**


**MEMBER FOR BUDERIM**

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Record of Proceedings, 22 May 2025

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Far North Queensland, Road Infrastructure**

 **Hon. BA MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.59 am): Residents of the Far North have been left in the lurch by the former Labor government for far too long when it comes to infrastructure, and the current state of the Barron River Bridge is a daily prominent reminder of that. In my life before politics, I crossed the Barron River Bridge twice daily on my commute from Cairns to Atherton. I learned exactly what that bridge meant to the community and I know exactly the impact on communities in both the Tablelands and Cairns every time that highway or that bridge is closed.

The Barron River Bridge is a lifeline for Far North communities. It is a bridge that was left to ruin under the former Labor government—a bridge that they only cared about when an election was looming. In contrast, the Crisafulli government does care about the safety and the reliability of critical roads and bridges in the Far North. At the last election Queenslanders recognised that, and they chose to elect two hardworking and committed members in the member for Barron River and the member for Cook, alongside their tireless advocate the member for Mulgrave slightly to the south. There has not been a day since I came into this place after October that the members for Barron River and Cook have not advocated to me or to the Premier on behalf of their communities. That is why we are getting on with the job of delivering a solution to the Barron River Bridge for the people of the Far North. In fact, a visit to the Barron River Bridge, alongside the member for Barron River and the member for Cook, was the very first trip that I made as the Minister for Transport and Main Roads at the end of last year.

Today we are releasing the summary business case for a new Barron River Bridge. This is an important step in the Crisafulli government's promise to do what we said we were going to do and to get on with the job. I can advise that the business case recommends a new bridge on a new alignment downstream from the existing bridge. The concept layout for this new bridge includes turnaround capability on the Kennedy Highway at the top of the Kuranda Range, as well as pathways for pedestrians and bike riders. I table the summary business case.

*Tabled paper:* Department of Transport and Main Roads: Barron River bridge, Kuranda replacement—Business Case Summary, April 2025 [526](#).

While construction takes place, the current bridge can safely remain in service with TMR's extensive routine maintenance program, to ensure connectivity of the Far North communities. I thank our TMR engineers and project teams for their work in ensuring that the existing bridge is trafficable, despite the circumstances that the former Labor government left them with.

I want to thank the federal government for its funding commitment of \$245 million to this important and long overdue project—funding that the former Labor state government was never able to secure, I might add. Securing this funding and considering recommendations in the detailed planning is the first

step for our government to deliver on its strong commitment to the Far North as we look to determine the way forward through the budget process. I look forward to informing the community of the next step in coming weeks.

Importantly, we are turning the page on a decade of neglect and inaction in relation to the Barron River Bridge. In the meantime, while budget deliberations are ongoing, work has been continuing to engage contractors and to perform further preparation for the necessary approvals so work can get started as soon as possible. I will continue to work collaboratively with my colleagues the member for Barron River and the member for Cook and also the federal government to deliver a solution because that is what Far North Queenslanders expect and that is what Far North Queenslanders deserve.