



# Annastacia Palaszczuk

WORKING TOGETHER FOR QUEENSLAND

8 October 2020

Cr Jack Bawden  
Chair - North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils  
Mayor - Carpentaria Shire Council  
PO Box 31 Normanton QLD 4890  
Via email: [nwqroc@carpentaria.qld.gov.au](mailto:nwqroc@carpentaria.qld.gov.au)

Dear Cr Bawden

Thank you for your letter of 28 August 2020 to Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk regarding Queensland Labor's policy commitments in the 2020 Queensland election, and for providing us with the North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (NWQROC) Queensland State Election: *Priorities for North West Queensland Councils and Communities*.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has put Queensland on the road to recovery by making strong decisions on the border and starting to deliver our economic recovery plan. We acknowledge the productive working relationship the government has had with NWQROC and the role NWQROC's eight local governments have played in delivering services to Queenslanders and driving regional economies.

When the Palaszczuk Labor Government and local governments work in partnership, we can achieve great things for the people of Queensland.

North West Queensland matters. This was highlighted when both the Premier and the Treasurer, Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, the Hon Cameron Dick MP spent the first official day of the campaign in Mt Isa, alongside Cr Danielle Slade, Mayor of Mount Isa City Council, to meet with some of the 1000 North Queensland workers whose jobs were saved by the Palaszczuk Labor Government's multi-million-dollar economic recovery boost.

As part of the economic recovery plan for the region, vital funding is assisting the ongoing operations of the Glencore Mount Isa Copper Smelter, as well as the Townsville copper refinery and manufacturer Incitec Pivot. This funding lifeline has saved more than 1000 resource and manufacturing jobs including 350 at the Mount Isa smelter.

While many economies around the world are still shut down because of the global pandemic, the Palaszczuk Labor Government's strong health response has ensured that we're able to focus on our economic recovery.

As part of our plan for economic recovery we are protecting jobs in North West Queensland, as well as maintaining critical industrial capability and supply chains.

Our support package will allow for the four-yearly re-bricking and maintenance work at the smelter, due in September 2021.

The North-West Minerals Province is one of the world's richest mineral-producing regions, with half a trillion dollars' worth of the new economy minerals needed for batteries and renewables. Demand for these critical minerals will climb over the next decade from the renewable and technology sector.

## **Works for Queensland**

Across the State, every council area is benefitting from the COVID Works for Queensland (W4Q) program.

The \$200 million 2020–21 COVID W4Q program is available to all Queensland councils and is to be used to support the delivery of job creating new infrastructure, maintenance or minor works projects, including the bring-forward of planned/budgeted maintenance or capital works, that are focused on essential services, economic development and community wellbeing outcomes.

The long-term economic benefits these projects will deliver is a fantastic outcome and will go a long way to helping Queensland unite and recover.

This initiative builds on the successful \$600 million Works for Queensland program that will create or support more than 21,000 jobs throughout regional Queensland.

Since the first round of Works for Queensland in 2016 the following funding allocations have been distributed to NWQROC Councils over the four rounds totalling \$46.81 million, delivering 165 projects and creating or supporting 1637.5 jobs:

- Burke Shire Council \$4.59M for 25 projects, creating or supporting 238.5 jobs
- Carpentaria Shire Council \$6.75M for 22 projects, creating or supporting 362 jobs
- Cloncurry Shire Council \$5.34M for 10 projects, creating or supporting 71 jobs
- Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council \$5.86M for 14 projects, creating or supporting 121 jobs
- Flinders Shire Council \$4.37M for 7 projects, creating or supporting 92 jobs
- McKinlay Shire Council \$4.21M for 28 projects, creating or supporting 143 jobs
- Mount Isa City Council \$11.51M for 22 projects, creating or supporting 371 jobs
- Richmond Shire Council \$4.18M for 37 projects, creating or supporting 239 jobs

Despite the demonstrated success of Works for Queensland, the LNP have never backed the program and refuse to commit to it if elected.

## **Roads and Transport**

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has a strong record of working with local governments to deliver road and transport infrastructure right across Queensland, including important upgrades for North West roads.

We restored the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) to \$70 million per annum after the Newman Government cut it by 37% - more than \$90 million cut over the term of their government.

That meant that under the LNP in 2012-13, \$2.3 million was delivered to North West Councils under TIDS, compared to \$5.5 million delivered each and every year by the Palaszczuk Labor Government from 2015-16 to 2020-21.

We understand how important it is to ensure that the level of total funding to councils provides a strong and sustainable pipeline of work over many years.

We have also kept the North West front of mind in working with the Federal Government to secure \$1 Billion in jointly funded road stimulus since April 2020 as part of Queensland's economic recovery plan, much of which is being delivered by local government.

That stimulus includes a significant number of projects funded in the North West, including:

- \$2.7 million for the Richmond Winton Road to replace two damaged culverts
- \$1.4 million for the Wills Developmental Road (Julia Creek – Burketown)
- \$10.7 million to replace Butchers Creek bridge
- \$3.5 million to progressively seal the Gregory Downs to Camooweal Road
- \$8.5 million to progressively seal the Cloncurry – Dajarra Road

As part of our current stimulus, the Palaszczuk Labor Government fully funded a \$200 million package specifically allocated to sealing projects. We will continue to identify opportunities to seal further sections of the state-controlled road network on a priority basis.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has delivered four record Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Programs (QTRIP) and we are committed to continuing our record by investing strongly in key economic enabling projects. We can therefore confirm that your request for additional roads funding will be considered as part of the finalisation of our next QTRIP.

We will always continue to invest in the Mount Isa Rail line, with major maintenance works completed following the 2019 floods reducing freight travel time between Mount Isa and Townsville by up to 50 minutes.

We have more than half-a-billion dollars committed over the past five years to support investment and production in the North West Mineral Province, including:

- \$80 million to encourage use of the Mount Isa Rail Line and get more trucks off the roads
- \$380 million over 5 years for Mount Isa Rail Line
- \$30 million for a new common user freight terminal in Townsville

We have always recognised the important link the Port of Townsville plays in the supply chain for the North West, and it is thanks to the Palaszczuk Labor Government that the Port of Townsville remains in public ownership.

We have made significant investments in the Port, in the Mount Isa Rail Line and in inter-modal facilities to enhance the Port's capacity to support the North West. We are pleased to confirm that Ms Connie Navarro who is the Secretary of the Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Development Zone, was appointed to the Port Board effective 1 October 2020.

We are not opposed in-principle to further considering the management arrangements for the Port of Karumba but note that Port's North continues to invest in dredging and facilities at the Port of Karumba.

## **Water and Waste**

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has a strong water investment record. To date, we have committed \$1.2 billion to water infrastructure across this state since 2017, supporting almost 2300 jobs in regional Queensland.

The government will continue investing in infrastructure projects that deliver value for money to taxpayers and delivers water an affordable price for local water users.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has appointed an independent expert panel to undertake a 21st century investigation into a Bradfield Scheme. Part of the expert panel's deliberations includes analysing Flinders River irrigation infrastructure projects. The Panel is expected to provide recommendations to government by the end of August 2021.

The Premier first raised the Bradfield Scheme in October last year and offered to work with the Commonwealth Government on a revised scheme.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government is taking the lead to comprehensively re-examine a Bradfield Scheme concept.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has also continued to work collaboratively with the Federal Government to advance detailed business cases of projects through such as the Hughenden Irrigation Project and provide supporting technical assistance.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has a proven record in advancing new water infrastructure projects across Queensland in collaboration with local government and will continue this partnership to advance region shaping water projects.

## **Energy and Connectivity**

The Palaszczuk Labor Government continues to invest in energy infrastructure in North and Far North Queensland.

Through Government owned generator CleanCo, our government recently supported the development of the \$380 million Kaban wind farm. This project will support 150 construction jobs and provide ongoing revenue for local farmers hosting the turbines.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government is also investing \$145 million to deliver three renewable energy zones, one of which will be in North Queensland.

These zones will help connect new renewable energy to our power network, and attract industries wanting new energy to a series of connected commercial and industrial power hubs across the state.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has taken the next major step in its support for the transformative \$1.7 billion CopperString 2.0 project as part of Queensland's ongoing COVID-19 economy recovery plan, entering into an agreement to support the next phase for the proposed CopperString 2.0 high voltage 1100 km transmission line to the North West Minerals province that will support over 750 FTE jobs during construction.

CopperString 2.0 will help further open up the North West Minerals Province, supporting thousands of good jobs right from new mines in North West Queensland through to minerals processing, new investment in renewables and manufacturing across North Queensland.

Across North Queensland the project has the potential to deliver another 3,500 FTE jobs and an additional \$154 billion in minerals production out to 2050. CopperString 2.0 will connect the north west to the national electricity grid at Townsville and play a vital role in Queensland's economic recovery from COVID-19.

Under an implementation agreement completed with the proponent CooperString last week, the Palaszczuk Labor Government will underwrite additional multi-million-dollar development costs, including completing the environmental impact study presently underway.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has committed more than half-a-billion dollars over the past five years to funding initiatives that support investment and production in the North West Minerals Province. That includes a \$380 million investment over five years to maintain and improve the Mount Isa line, \$30 million towards a new common user freight terminal in Townsville and \$80 million over four years to subsidise rail access charges on the Mount Isa line, as well as almost \$16 million for CopperString to date.

By contrast, the LNP tried to sell off the Mt Isa line and the Townsville port, wasting \$100 million preparing for asset sales.

With regards to the Natural Resource Investment Program, the Palaszczuk Labor Government continues to deliver \$60 million, across 2018 – 2022, for this program. This includes more than \$5 million allocated to the North West.

### **Community and Environment**

We are supporting new investment and jobs with the extension of the government owned QCN Fibre to provide Queenslanders with faster, more reliable internet by using 10,000km of state-owned optical fibre along the east coast of Queensland. In doing so, the Palaszczuk Labor Government is improving the quality of internet for homes and businesses, which will in turn support broader economic and social benefits for regional Queensland.

And our Unite & Recover economic recovery stimulus package includes funding of \$5 million for cluster fencing, as part of the Palaszczuk Labor Government's response to the unprecedented challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Queensland's construction sector is one of the many parts of our economy doing it tough through COVID-19. That's why, in June this year, the Palaszczuk Labor Government reaffirmed its commitment to the \$15,000 First Homeowners Grant Program and announced a \$5,000 Regional Home Building Boost.

In conjunction with the \$25,000 HomeBuilder program, these measures mean that new home buyers in regional Queensland are eligible for up to \$45,000 in Government support, which will flow through to our vital construction industry.

Our Regional Home Building Boost provides extra incentives for all Queenslanders – not just first home buyers – to build a new home in the regions. And our implementation of HomeBuilder means that eligible Queenslanders can buy or renovate their dream home.

As NWQROC would be aware, the National Partnership on Remote Housing (NPRH) expired on 30 June 2018 and in the 2018–19 and 2019–20 Federal Budgets the LNP made no provision for housing in Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities in Queensland.

In the absence of any funding from the Federal LNP Government for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander housing, in 2018 the Palaszczuk Labor Government committed \$40 million to an interim remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing program.

## Regionally Focussed Policy and Partnerships

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has undertaken a collaborative effort with governments, industries, businesses and communities to shape an economic recovery plan for every region across the state.

As part of Queensland's Economic Recovery Plan, each regional plan is focused on protecting Queenslanders' health, creating jobs and working together.

Our Outback Queensland Regional Recovery Plan provides details of the \$506 million in Palaszczuk Labor Government capital investment, supporting an estimated 1,900 jobs in 2020-21. The Plan is available online here:

[https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0025/140596/outback-qld-action-plan.pdf](https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0025/140596/outback-qld-action-plan.pdf)

We recognise Outback Queensland is as diverse as it is expansive, with rich mineral production, sheep and cattle grazing, agriculture and tourism.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government remains committed to not only supporting Outback Queensland on the road to recovery but also making sure we position the region for future growth and job generating opportunities.

Thank you again for providing your detailed State Election 2020 Platform. If re-elected, a Palaszczuk Labor Government remains committed to ongoing engagement with NWQROC on these and other issues.

Now is not the time to risk the LNP's cuts. Queensland's ongoing economic and health recovery requires leadership and stability, and Deb Frecklington and the LNP are a risk to our recovery.

I urge you to communicate this message with your members and supporters. Should the Palaszczuk Labor Government be re-elected, we look forward to continuing to work with NWQROC for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

Yours sincerely



**STIRLING HINCHLIFFE MP**  
**Minister for Local Government,**  
**Minister for Racing and**  
**Minister for Multicultural Affairs**