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Email: hansard@parliament.qld.gov.au
Phone (07) 3553 6344 Fax (07) 3553 6369

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 18 August 2016


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the 2016-17 budget to establish the delivery authority and to progress planning and delivery of the project. We have also announced an in-principle commitment of \$800 million overall to the project.

This is the largest commitment to the Cross River Rail project made by any government to date. That is a good start, but we still need other levels of government to put in their fair share. To that extent, I have had productive discussions with my federal counterparts, the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Minister for Urban Infrastructure and the Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation, about how the project connects with their Cities Agenda. The full business case for Cross River Rail has already been provided to Infrastructure Australia for review and assessment and we will continue to work with the Commonwealth agencies to ensure they have all the necessary information to facilitate a funding decision by the federal government.

In the meantime, we are not sitting back. The work on Cross River Rail continues. Detailed design work is now underway and the project team will soon submit a Request for Project Change under the existing environmental impact statement approval to the Coordinator-General, with full approval of the EIS anticipated by year's end. Readiness for market activities are also continuing and we are working to have procurement packages potentially ready for market in 2017. We are pushing ahead with the Cross River Rail Economic Development Strategy. Cross River Rail is a vital project for this state and we are doing all we can to see this project happen.


Reparations Review Panel

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (9.49 am): From the late 19th century and for a large part of the 20th century, in this state governments exercised control over all aspects of the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They were subject to protection acts that included control over their wages and their savings. We have previously recognised that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people suffered direct disadvantage from racially discriminatory government practices of the past, such as stolen wages. As part of that approach, to date more than \$5.8 million in reparations have been paid to more than 3,000 eligible claimants under the government's new \$21 million stolen wages reparation scheme.

Now, in a milestone for this state, we have established a dedicated reparations review panel to ensure that those who are eligible receive reparations. The expert panel has been set up in direct response to the community feedback received during consultation by the Stolen Wages Reparations Taskforce, led by then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda. The five-member expert panel will reassess claims that were initially deemed ineligible due to a lack of verifiable government records showing whether or not there was government control of a person's wages or savings. The panel is not part of an appeals process. Rather, claims assessed and deemed inconclusive by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships due to insufficient documentation will be examined by the Reparations Review Panel. This new process gives unsuccessful applicants an opportunity to present oral testimony about their personal experiences and other evidence to support their claims in the absence of formal documentation. Already the panel, which met for the first time earlier this month, has approved two claims as eligible by drawing on personal accounts from individuals, surviving co-workers and knowledge of community life. The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships is working to fast-track those payments to both eligible claimants, who are now in their eighties.

Those are examples of genuine claims that, without the review panel process, would have otherwise sadly fallen through the cracks due to inconclusive records. Indigenous Queenslanders wronged by previous governments and protection acts should not be further disadvantaged by a lack of record keeping from years gone by. We ought to remove barriers and red tape that discourage eligible Indigenous Queenslanders from progressing their claims to ensure that no-one misses out on their rightful entitlements. This new method for reviewing claims is vital given that, for many Indigenous Queenslanders, there is little or no paper trail of their employment and mistreatment in this often undocumented era in Queensland's history. I believe the establishment of the Reparations Review Panel will deliver justice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, while acknowledging the injustices of the past.

Mental Health, Services

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.51 am): I rise to update the House on the rebuilding of mental health care facilities for young people in Queensland. Yesterday the Department of Health undertook further consultation with families


affected by the decision of the Newman-Nicholls government to close the Barrett centre without a replacement. A key outcome of that meeting is that the families agreed they would work with Health Consumers Queensland and Queensland Health in the ongoing planning of the new facility that will provide residential mental health care for young people.

Through this process, families will have the opportunity to be represented on various committees, finalising the clinical model and the building design alongside experts. That consultation and cooperation is extremely important, because the Barrett Commission of Inquiry report demonstrated that the Newman-Nicholls government did not listen to advice from families or experts, even when the government itself asked for it. The commission found that the Newman-Nicholls government created an expert clinical reference group in relation to the Barrett centre. In their final report, the experts recommended that a replacement facility should be built.

The commission found that the report was provided to the office of the then health minister, the member for Southern Downs. However, the member for Southern Downs gave evidence to the commission that he had not read the report and did not bother to read it until he was preparing to give evidence before the commission itself earlier this year. The commission also found that there was no evidence that anyone in the then minister's office had read it. As many members here would remember, on 22 August 2013 the then opposition leader, now the Premier, tabled the expert clinical reference group's report in question time in front of the member for Southern Downs. However, the member for Southern Downs's sworn testimony to the commission of inquiry was that he did not read that document, even when it was tabled in front of him in this House.


I have no reason to disbelieve the sworn testimony of the honourable member. However, I think it does show how the Newman-Nicholls government closed the door to advice, to the experts and to voices other than their own. I intend to keep the House fully informed of this government's actions in providing a replacement for the Barrett centre, a process that we are determined to get right.

State Schools, Teachers

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (9.54 am): I am pleased to inform the House that the Palaszczuk government has opened four new professional learning hubs to train and support state school teachers in key locations across the state. This is all about ensuring we have the best teachers in our classrooms. We are investing \$800,000 to support those new hubs at schools in Ipswich, Rockhampton, Roma and Mount Isa to help attract and develop teachers in those areas. The hubs will coordinate and deliver professional learning programs relevant to each location to support teachers. That will be done through additional in-school professional experiences for teachers and preservice teachers. Experienced mentors will also be matched with teachers to participate in professional development workshops.

This year, Queensland students achieved their best-ever NAPLAN results. Our year 3 students ranked first in the country for grammar and punctuation for the very first time ever. However, we recognise that there is more to do to improve literacy and numeracy standards across the state. To lift educational outcomes, we know that attracting, supporting and retaining quality teachers is vital and the professional support hubs will do just that. They support and develop the capability of preservice, beginning and experienced teachers in identified high-priority locations across Queensland. They will boost professional development support for teachers and help ensure every teacher in every classroom has the skills and know-how to deliver quality education for our students.

Mining Industry, Exploration

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (9.56 am): The Palaszczuk government recognises the difficulties being faced by the exploration sector due to the global commodity downturn. The resources sector has historically been the workhorse of the Queensland economy and will continue to be a significant contributor for decades to come. Accessing finance and the declining demand for discoveries have placed considerable pressure on our exploration sector. That is why earlier this year I announced concessions for mineral and coal explorers to deliver a possible 50 per cent reduction to the expenditure they are required to commit for mineral exploration over the next two years. It must be remembered that some of those exploration companies are mum-and-dad companies. They are hard workers for Queensland.

The Queensland Exploration Council, the Queensland Resources Council, the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies and mayors in local resource communities overwhelmingly support