

Palaszczuk Budget reaches out to regions with \$200 million program

The Palaszczuk Government's first Budget will deliver \$200 million to regional Queensland for crucial infrastructure and jobs.

State Development Minister Dr Anthony Lynham said the 2015-16 State Budget meant approved projects could begin in regional communities as early as January next year.

"Our government recognises the importance of the regions and this is why we have made the decision to bring forward funding of \$100 million to this financial year instead of it commencing in the 2016-17 financial year," he said.

"This means that projects can begin six months earlier than originally anticipated with regional communities seeing important infrastructure projects get underway.

"Building our Regions was our election commitment and today we are going a step further and making sure regional communities see the benefits sooner rather than later.

"A further \$100 million will be available in 2016-2017. We are encouraging eligible applicants to come forward with projects that will be catalysts in their communities."

Applications will now open in early August.

Dr Lynham said the funding for *Building our Regions* was the biggest ticket item in a \$620 million budget for the Department of State Development.

"This Budget confirms the Department of State Development's role as the Government's engine room," he said.

"Just as it was a Labor Government that put the foundations in place for the liquefied natural gas projects in Gladstone that are now starting to export to Asia, this government will work with business to get commercial outcomes."

Dr Lynham said other important programs that the department would deliver this financial year included:

- creating economic hubs of activity to increase investment
- establishing an industry and manufacturing advisory group to ensure programs are meeting industry needs
- fostering economic development while protecting the Great Barrier Reef through implementation of the Government's port-related commitments in the *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan*.

Media contact: Jan Martin 3719 7370; 0439 341 314