

Palaszczuk's \$200m boost

EXCLUSIVE
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A FURTHER \$22 million in public works will be fast-tracked to create jobs in Townsville, bringing the value of the State Government's total accelerated works in the past fortnight to more than \$200 million.

The latest round of roads, port, school and sport facility refurbishment projects are expected to create 56 fulltime jobs.

The projects come after the first meeting of State Cabinet for the year on Monday after Ms Palaszczuk gave her ministers a week to identify works that could be brought forward to create jobs in response to mass sackings at Queensland Nickel Industries.

None of the works are newly funded, with all accounted for in the current budget and many supported by Federal Government programs.

"The projects were considered at cabinet on Monday as part of the (Accelerated Works Program) process and my Government's commitment to drive economic growth and job generation across the state," Ms Palaszczuk said in Townsville yes-

FAST-TRACKED

Additional projects to be accelerated include:

- \$8.8 million for Bruce Hwy widening and rehabilitation projects, including Didgeridoo Creek to East Barratta Creek, East Barratta Creek to West Barratta Creek, and Lochinvar Station Rd to Collinsons Lagoon.
- \$5 million for James Cook University village infrastructure.
- \$3.4 million for additional projects at the Port of Townsville.
- A combined \$5.6 million of projects for school refurbishments, walking tracks at Magnetic Island and Bowling Green National Park and Townsville Sports and Recreation Precinct.

terday. "My Government is committed to bringing forward projects to secure more jobs and economic opportunities for our regions, including Townsville and North Queensland."

The start dates vary by project, but the majority will be started in March and April, meaning some of the projects will be expedited by just weeks or months.

Last week, the Government fast-tracked \$187 million worth of projects in its funded capital works program in North Queensland.

Ms Palaszczuk said more projects throughout Queensland would be forthcoming.

"My Cabinet looked at how we can accelerate public works right across the region," she said.

"Over the next few weeks you will see our program of bringing forward accelerated capital works being rolled out in places like Cairns, in Gladstone, in Rockhampton and in Mackay."

Ms Palaszczuk would not comment further on the future of QNI.

"The process at the moment now is in the hands of the administrators," she said. "My focus is on the workers."

Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland Coralee O'Rourke said the State Government was listening and working with the community, industry and business.

"The Accelerated Works Program is a great example of how we are responding to local demands, growing the economy and delivering on our promises," she said.



DRIVING GROWTH:
Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk in Townsville yesterday for Australia Day celebrations.

Picture: ZAK SIMMONDS