



Bright future for the North

TOWNSVILLE'S a place I always love coming to and I'm excited by the vibrant future of this great city.

I congratulate the city for again putting on such a world-class event in the Townsville 400 V8 Supercars.

While I couldn't make it to the race, my partner Tim was there and I haven't stopped hearing all week about Jamie Whincup's win, and the warm welcome he received from local race fans!

This event was a fine example of Townsville's capacity to attract and host world class events.

And that capacity is only going to grow and needs to be supported by all levels of government.

But let's not forget the way in which this event got off the ground: a grass roots movement spearheaded by everyday Townsville residents. Not in it for themselves, but in it for the community and to make Townsville an even better place. So what is it that makes Townsville and North Queensland so special? The answer is simple: its people.

It was the people of North Queensland who displayed such enormous strength of character during the recovery from Cyclone Yasi.

It's in the way that generations of North Queenslanders have embraced their role as a garrison city, so often the departure point of Defence Force operations around the world.

It's the work ethic and the belief in the fair go of North Queenslanders that has turned this region into an economic powerhouse, delivering wealth and prosperity not just locally but for the entire country.

And it's the spirit of guardianship you hold as protectors of the Great Barrier Reef and the World Heritage-listed natural wonders the region is home to.

The Federal Government wants to work in concert with the people of North Queensland to ensure the region can continue to grow sustainably and prosperously.

It's why, following Yasi, we worked hand in hand with you every day to help rebuild the region.

It's why we're investing more money on North Queensland roads and infrastructure than ever before: \$160 million to finish the Townsville Ring Road, helping to deliver the \$110 million Douglas Arterial duplication and the \$190 million Port Access Road.

A growing region like yours needs and deserves

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Julia Gillard

this sort of infrastructure to keep trucks off local streets, cut traffic and ensure Townsville grows in a way which preserves the great way of life you enjoy.

And when it comes to investing in Townsville's social infrastructure, I am pleased to say that my government has a solid record – helping build the new Ocean Terminal, redeveloping Flinders Street, upgrading every local school and delivering better health and hospitals.

No Federal Government in Australia's history has invested in this region like this one has.

Australia is fortunate to be one of the world's strongest economies, but even though unemployment is low a lot of people feel like this is somebody else's mining boom.

That is why the Federal Government is spreading the benefits of the boom by providing more financial assistance to everyday Townsville residents.

A new Schoolkids Bonus cash payment of up to \$820 has already been automatically deposited into the bank accounts of 9950 local families with kids in school. We're increasing the family payments of 8350 local Townsville families.

And we're also tripling the tax-free threshold from \$6000 to \$18,200, providing a tax cut of over \$300 for 48,000 Townsville residents, the largest increase in the history of the tax-free threshold.

These are important reforms that will put more money in the pockets of Townsville families. Sadly they're all opposed by our political opponents, who aren't interested in ensuring the benefits of the mining boom are shared among all Australians.

I've watched a region like North Queensland go from strength to strength over the years, and I think everyone would agree that it has a strong, vibrant future ahead.

I'm looking forward to my visit to Townsville, and if you see me around town, come and say g'day.

Julia Gillard,
Prime Minister

G20 meet not likely in Townsville

TOWNSVILLE is unlikely to secure a meeting of finance ministers from the world's 20 biggest economies because we don't have the convention facilities to host a function of that size.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard yesterday announced a regional city in Queensland would host the finance meeting when the G20 summit is held in Brisbane in November, 2014.

Ms Gillard, who will be in Townsville today to blog exclusively for the *Bulletin*, said she wasn't able to discuss which cities would be candidates.

“Well look we're not in a position to announce the city yet,” she said. “Some work has to be done. But there are a number of places across Queensland that can be considered.”

Townsville Enterprise chief executive David Kippin said Townsville was unlikely to be a serious contender for the meeting because of the state of the city's convention centre and a lack of high-end accommodation.

“We will be pushing the case very hard for Townsville, but it is more likely the Gold Coast, or

possibly Cairns will get the conference,” he said.

“Townsville will not have a new convention centre before 2014, and the one we have at the moment is not at that world standard.

“It absolutely proves the point about Townsville needing a new convention centre.”

However, Mayor Jenny Hill said Townsville was the obvious choice. “We are the second capital of Queensland and I think Townsville would be the perfect backdrop to one of the G20 meetings,” she said.



**BLOG LIVE
WITH THE
PM TODAY**

To chat with the Prime Minister, log on to townsvillebulletin.com.au at 1:30pm today and follow the prompts