



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT Carpentaria/Mount Isa Minerals Province

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.41 a.m.), by leave: As all honourable members are aware, the Carpentaria/Mount Isa Minerals Province of Queensland is one of the great mining regions of the world, promising to inject at least \$30 billion into the State economy and generate more than 10,000 jobs. Indeed, the province is central to my Government's strategy to generate jobs throughout Queensland—at the mines themselves, in the nearby regional towns and cities such as Mount Isa, and in the coastal towns and cities such as Townsville.

Two weeks ago, I visited the Ernest Henry copper/gold mine and officially opened the extensions to the nearby Cloncurry airport, which paves the way for that great mine to get up to full production. Next week I will officially open the Phosphate Hill mine south of Mount Isa, but tomorrow, together with the Minister for Mines and Energy, I will travel to the BHP owned Cannington mine for the opening ceremony.

Cannington is a \$500m operation which, like the other big six mines of the Carpentaria/Mount Isa Minerals Province, generates services, growth and, most importantly, jobs. For the record, Cannington is the world's largest single mine producer of silver and lead. At full production, it will mine and process 1.5 million tonnes of ore a year. Each year it will produce 750 tonnes of silver. Cannington will produce 6% of the forecast developed world's primary silver production. It will also produce about 7% of the world's primary lead output. Export earnings are projected to be \$4.3 billion. But the benefits to Australia will not stop there. BHP Minerals will pay a total tax bill of about \$1.1 billion. That is money in the bank as far as Australia is concerned. It is money for health, education, roads and the like.

The specific benefits for Queenslanders are also worth putting on the record. At the mine site, 400 Queenslanders will have jobs. That is 400 more jobs for Queenslanders. Importantly, many of these jobs will be for people who live in the north-west. In fact, many jobs have already been generated in the region in the gearing-up stage of the Cannington mine. To date, Cannington has pumped about \$400m into the Queensland economy, much of that in the north-west.

Projects such as Cannington are also important because of the improved infrastructure that they bring—services such as transport, communications, water, health and education. For example, the new mining projects in the region prompted Queensland Rail's decision to spend \$200m to upgrade the line from Mount Isa to Townsville. This has been one of the biggest such engineering undertakings in the world. It will be a major factor in opening up the region and generating economic growth. It will bring faster freight services and greater capacity. That means the entire region benefits through improved general freight, agricultural and passenger services.

The previous Labor Government recognised that all of these benefits, but particularly the jobs, could be realised only if there was a coordinated approach. Labor got the major players together, cut the red tape and drove the development of this great mining region. Now the people of north-west Queensland are starting to reap the benefits of yet another Labor initiative.
