



Speech by

**Hon. T. McGRADY**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA**

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Hansard 25 March 1999

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Coal Mine Site Rehabilitation Program**

**Hon. T. McGRADY** (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister Assisting the Deputy Premier on Regional Development) (9.48 a.m.), by leave: Today I will sign an agreement that will take our State a further step towards responsible environmental management in the mining industry. The agreement is with the Australian Centre for Mining and Environmental Research to establish a coal mine site rehabilitation program. The centre is an incorporated body involving research organisations and includes the CSIRO, the University of Queensland and a number of major mining companies. This agreement will see about \$2.5m channelled into the research program over a period of 10 years to fund postgraduate scholarships and research grants.

The program will be funded by moneys held in trust following the disbandment of the Queensland coal board some years ago. The intention of the fund was for the moneys to be utilised for the benefit of the mining industry. Environmental research related to coalmine sites is considered an appropriate application of the funds available. The University of Central Queensland and the University of Queensland will each receive grants over the first two years as funding support towards academic positions associated with coalmine rehabilitation, teaching and research.

I am hopeful that the ongoing research will result in new and better ways of addressing environmental management during mining and rehabilitation after mining. An added bonus will be that the two universities involved will be able to increase their teaching capacities, which will result in more graduates trained to assist the coalmining industry to achieve best practice for environmental operations.

After the planned 10-year research period, any funds left in the account will be applied directly to enhance the standard of coalmine rehabilitation in Queensland. This funding will have definite, long-term benefits to the people of our State as the outcomes of the research flow into the mining industry. In this way, the payback for Queensland's environment and economy will be many times the original investment made. The signing of this agreement today will undoubtedly bring immense benefit to the universities involved, to the coalmining industry and, indeed, to Queensland as a whole.

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