



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

---

Hansard 11 April 2000

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Industrial Projects; Mr R. Boyle

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.34 a.m.), by leave: During the 1998 election campaign, I promised Queenslanders that I would get this State moving again. By that stage Queensland had had two years and four months of a Borbidge coalition minority Government that was happy to claim credit for projects initiated by the former Goss Government but did nothing to get new projects into Queensland on their behalf.

During the past 21 months my Government has been a driving force behind the transformation of more than \$10 billion worth of projects from dreams to reality, and that is not an exhaustive list. It does not include new technology projects and new age industries, such as Virgin Airlines. Those major industrial projects include Comalco alumina refinery, \$1,400m; Australian Magnesium, \$1,130m; Millmerran Power Station, \$1,400m; Tarong Energy expansion, \$1,000m; airport rail link, \$190m; Gold Coast Convention Centre and associated construction, \$300m; Century Zinc mine, \$850m; Sun Metals refinery, \$530m; Callide Power expansion, \$800m; interconnector to New South Wales, \$242m; TradeCoast, \$1,000m; Roma fertiliser plant, \$675m; and Stuart Oil Shale Stage 1, \$250m.

As I said, that is not an exhaustive list, but it is a list that is envied by every other State Government in Australia, and there are more projects in the pipeline. It is little wonder that the Australian newspaper declared that Queensland was becoming the industrial hub of the nation. As David Whiting from the Australian Industry Group said, the majority of major project development in Australia is taking place in Queensland. The AIG went on to say in the Australian on 4 April 2000—

"The economic and industrial climate together with access to markets and the aggressive approach the Queensland Government has to attracting new venture capital to Queensland are all factors in achieving the successes it has."

That list of projects adds up to \$9.8 billion and, more importantly, will generate more than 11,000 construction jobs and 5,130 full-time long-term operational jobs.

Let us have a look at some of the more recent announcements. Two weeks ago the Australian Magnesium Corporation announced that its proposed \$1.13 billion plant near Stanwell had resolved its technical issues and is ready for development. That project will put Queensland at the cutting edge of the development of new age metals. Magnesium, in particular, is set to revolutionise the car industry and demand for the metal is set to grow at a rapid rate. The light metals industry will not only be a prime jobs generator for central Queensland and the State but will also offer flow-on benefits to the nation in terms of balance of trade.

Last week, we had further evidence that Queensland is moving again, with Comalco Limited announcing it has selected Gladstone as the preferred site for a \$1.4 billion alumina refinery. This is great news for Gladstone and Queensland. It is a massive \$1.4 billion vote of confidence in Queensland by one of the world's largest companies. My Government has worked hard to turn this project from a dream into a reality. Comalco's decision to choose Gladstone ahead of Malaysia is a major step towards achieving our goal.

This project, together with last week's announcement of a \$1.13 billion magnesium metals project near Rockhampton, the Sun Metals project in Townsville, the giant Century Zinc mine and other

mineral developments in the north-west, as well as our exciting future in biotechnology, will take Queensland to the next stage of economic growth and prosperity. Queensland has long been regarded by some as a rocks and crops economy. Now Queensland is building on those strengths by adding value to our mineral and agricultural resources. Value adding is our future because it means new industries and new jobs.

The Comalco refinery will generate 700 construction jobs and 450 new jobs at the refinery and associated operations such as the adjoining co-generation plant. The refinery will produce 1.4 million tonnes of alumina a year and inject almost \$500m a year into the State economy. This project has added significance, however, because it will stimulate many thousands of jobs in other projects such as the PNG-Queensland natural gas pipeline. The pipeline will be a major catalyst for further industrial development all the way along the Queensland coastline from Brisbane to Bamaga. The third major project last week was the official opening of Pasminco Ltd Century Zinc mine in the far north-west of the State. The project has been driven from day one by a Labor Government. It almost stalled under the coalition, who belatedly agreed to negotiations over native title, and now a Labor Government has picked it up and delivered it. Century is a \$788m project creating 450 permanent jobs.

I am pleased to say that among the major beneficiaries will be local indigenous people through the Gulf Communities Agreement that includes—and I will set out the details—employment and training plans for local indigenous people with 130 now involved in permanent jobs and traineeships; business opportunities for local indigenous people and ongoing assistance in the establishment of those businesses producing 11 new businesses so far and 14 more in the process of starting; protection of the environment and cultural heritage; transfer of five neighbouring pastoral leases to eventual local indigenous ownership; and continued consultation and communication with local indigenous communities. This is what native title should be all about. It is about using development opportunities to give indigenous communities a hand up rather than a handout. The economic opportunities provided to the local indigenous community will help them determine their own future when so often in the past others have determined it for them.

The mine, which also boasts one of the world's largest resources of lead and silver, has been in planning and trial stages since 1992 when the Goss Labor Government established the Carpentaria/Mount Isa mineral province. This initiative resulted in the north-west attracting investments of more than \$4.5 billion, including the Century project. Importantly, this Labor initiative also helped to create more than 2,000 permanent new jobs and about 7,000 other jobs in associated industries.

My Government has provided more than \$1m in vocational education and training to complement Pasminco initiatives. Prevocational programs, language, literacy and numeracy and life skills training are also funded. Under these arrangements to date, there has been basic life skills training support provided for 302 local indigenous people in the communities of Mornington Island, Doomadgee, Normanton, Karumba and Burketown. So far, 150 local indigenous people have been assisted with traineeships and apprenticeships. As everyone knows, my Government is passionate about jobs for all Queenslanders and it is fantastic to see young indigenous people working in this mine. Let us put these three projects, that is, Century, Comalco and Australian Magnesium, in perspective. These projects have a combined value of \$3.3 billion that will produce 1,150 new long-term jobs in regional and remote Queensland where they are most needed. These are projects that my Government is proud to have delivered on behalf of this State.

It is with some sadness, however, that today I want to pay tribute to a great public servant who helped in a significant way to make possible many of the projects that I just outlined. As I say, it is with great sadness that I must inform the House of the death yesterday of Ronald Kevin Boyle, the Director-General of the Queensland Department of Mines and Energy. He was 52 years of age. I want to deal a little bit with Ron's career. Ron attended the Marist Brothers College at Ashgrove and completed a degree in economics at the University of Queensland. Ron served a range of Commonwealth and Queensland Governments with distinction. For many years he worked with the Commonwealth Department of Overseas Trade, which is now Austrade. During his 16 years in the Queensland Public Service from 1984, he was much admired for his calm response to pressure, his good judgment and his modest, self-deprecating but effective leadership style. Those Ministers and staff who worked with Ron remember this well, including the Minister for Mines and Energy and the member for Mount Isa, Tony McGrady. Ron successfully revitalised the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development in the early 1990s. As director-general, he provided leadership during a challenging period of transition and established a number of the industry attraction programs which have proved long-term winners for Queensland.

Though he served in the industry portfolio with distinction, Ron left on the change of Government in February 1996. He worked in temporary roles in the Department of Tourism, Small Business and Industry as well as the Department of Primary Industries where he applied his skills to the export of Queensland's rural products. In June 1998 Ron was appointed Director-General of the Department of Mines and Energy. In that role he could draw upon expertise in industry development

spanning decades and on the sound, careful but pragmatic management skills developed through an impressive career. Ron quickly proved himself as an effective CEO, making a major contribution to issues from mining legislation to greenhouse gas emissions and State energy policy. He positioned the Department of Mines and Energy to take a stronger role in policy and proved a skilled negotiator in establishing a working relationship with the new Environmental Protection Agency.

He was a quiet and thoughtful man and an embodiment of the virtues of a career public servant. Ron Boyle has served Queensland well and will be much missed. Ron is survived by his wife, Judith, and four children. On behalf of the Parliament, I extend our sympathies to his family. As members of the House would appreciate, the Government was stunned yesterday with Ron's sudden death. On these occasions, there is not much we can say to the family which will ease the pain other than to place on the parliamentary record how valued he was by the Government, how valued he was by the people he worked with and how respected he was not only by his Minister but also by all Ministers in my Government. As I said, when Tony McGrady told me yesterday about Ron's death, I was stunned. All I can do is say to his family today that he will be very, very sadly missed.

---