



Speech by

JEFF SEENEY

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Hansard 3 May 2001

AUSTRALIAN INLAND RAIL EXPRESSWAY; NATHAN DAM

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (7.15 p.m.): On Friday, 26 October this year, people from all over Australia will gather on the banks of the Macintyre River near Goondiwindi for a ceremony to drive the first spike on the Australian inland rail expressway. This is a truly visionary project that will create an economic revolution in rural Australia as industries are able to move from the crowded areas of the capital cities and new industries are able to establish along the transport corridor. I hope that the Minister for State Development and every other member of this House can lend this project the support that it deserves.

The Toowoomba to Gladstone section of this project will run through the Callide electorate—from Miles to Taroom and Moura in the Dawson Valley and then through the Callide Valley past Biloela to Gladstone. The successful completion of this project will transform the Callide and Dawson Valleys, as well as the communities of Biloela, Moura and Taroom, and see them realise their obvious potential.

The Callide Valley, with its existing power generation capacity at Biloela, is well placed to become a major inland industrial region with a high-speed modern rail link not only to Gladstone but also to the rest of Australia. The Dawson Valley will almost certainly develop as a major new agricultural area through the combination of the Australian inland rail expressway and the construction of a major water storage at the Nathan dam site near Taroom.

Along with the rail expressway, the Nathan dam is the key piece of infrastructure on which the future development of this great area of central Queensland depends. The provision of a water storage infrastructure like the Nathan dam project is solely in the hands of the Queensland state government. I have spoken about this project in this House many times.

With the advancement of the inland rail expressway, the need to progress the Nathan dam project is becoming even more urgent. The state government and the Minister for State Development have an obligation to all of the people of central Queensland to progress this project. It has been stalled for too long. It has been bogged down for too long by a series of unreasonable demands and a seemingly endless series of studies, reports and procrastination by the proponent and continuing demands by the anti-everything brigade who will never be satisfied.

For the sake of the Queensland economy and the sake of those Queenslanders who badly need jobs, this government should be supporting both of those projects. The Nathan dam project, together with the inland rail expressway, will together provide a great future for thousands of Queenslanders. They will provide a great future for the Queenslanders whom I represent; they will provide a great future for generations of Queenslanders to come and a great economic future for the whole area of central Queensland.

I urge the Minister for State Development to do everything humanly possible to remove the impediments from the progress of these projects and especially to use his influence to progress the Nathan dam project. If the government can facilitate the construction of that major infrastructure, then private enterprise will certainly do the rest. They will certainly develop the industry that will give central Queensland a great future for many years to come.

Every member in this parliament should support this type of infrastructure development. It is a key role of state governments to ensure that the jobs, jobs, jobs mantra that we hear so often from members on that side of the House becomes something more than meaningless rhetoric and actually becomes reality.

Time expired.
