



Speech by


Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Wednesday, 3 August 2011

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mining Industry, Indigenous Participation

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining) (2.20 pm): Today the Bligh government has signed an historic memorandum of understanding with the federal government and the Queensland Resources Council to boost employment and business opportunities for Indigenous people in Queensland's mining industry. Our commitment—\$200,000 over two years—to boost the number of Indigenous jobs in mining is being matched by the Commonwealth, with a \$140,000 contribution from the QRC. But it is not all about the dollars; it is about the job opportunities that we will be able to offer Indigenous people, especially in the resource-rich regions of North-West Queensland and around the Bowen Basin.

It is a unique partnership with industry. By working together we will be able to better coordinate employment, training and business opportunities for Indigenous people in Queensland's resources sector. Our partners, the QRC and its member companies, will strive to reach specific targets to ensure Indigenous people are fairly represented in mining industry jobs. The sheer size and scale of Queensland's resources sector will also help ensure that Indigenous Queenslanders have access to real job opportunities and the skills needed to get a job in the mining industry here in Queensland. The QRC will develop regional action plans that outline specific strategies, responsibilities, time frames and targets each party to the agreement will be required to meet in those regions covered by the MOU. Our agreement unites government, industry, companies and communities in a shared commitment to deliver jobs, training and business opportunities for Indigenous people.

Mining is a big employer in the Bowen Basin and in the north-west, and that is why I want to acknowledge the member for Mount Isa, Betty Kiernan, who attended the MOU signing ceremony today and who understands more than most the importance of mining to the people who live and work in her region. It sustains communities, strengthens regional economies and provides jobs and job security. I am delighted that the Bligh government is working in partnership with the federal government, represented today by Senator Mark Arbib, and the QRC and its member companies in backing jobs for Indigenous workers.