



Speech by


Hon. Jeff Seeneey

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Hansard Tuesday, 29 May 2012

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Alpha Coal Project

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.44 am): Queensland's Galilee Basin contains major untapped reserves of thermal coal that have the potential to bring huge economic benefits not only to our state but also to the nation as a whole. Today, I want to report to the House that the Coordinator-General has provided conditional approval for Hancock Coal's Alpha Coal Project in the Galilee Basin. This is the first approval for a mine in the Galilee Basin, which, when developed, will be one of the biggest in Australia.

It comes after a four-year process involving an environmental impact statement examining all of the anticipated impacts of the project and it comes with conditions to ensure that those impacts are minimised and mitigated. The GVK-Hancock venture will spend almost \$6½ billion to develop the mine and its associated infrastructure. Once operational, the mine expects to export 30 million tonnes of coal annually. It will generate 3,600 construction jobs and almost 1,000 permanent operational jobs.

The predicted flow-on benefits to the state, the nation and to every Queenslanders are immense. Over the projected 30-year life of the mine, an estimated \$83 billion in exports—around \$3 billion annually—will be earned; during the construction phase, there will be an estimated \$11 billion stimulation of the state economy, with 80 per cent of that benefit being retained in Queensland; and, during the operations phase, spending of \$190 million a year should bring an annual benefit for the economy of more than \$1 billion. This is a project that will have a profound effect on the Queensland economy and on the economic future of every Queenslanders for generations to come.

All of those factors highlight why projects like this are so important for the future of Queensland and why we are so determined to deliver them for the future of Queensland. Unlike the last government, we will ensure that these major projects are processed in an efficient manner, that they are dealt with in shorter time frames, that decisions are taken rather than deferred, that decisions are taken rather than dodged, or dumped in the too-hard basket. This project has passed a rigorous assessment, with the Coordinator-General providing a 383-page report, imposing 128 conditions on the proponents to mitigate the anticipated impacts. Those conditions and the other recommendations will ensure that those impacts are mitigated and properly managed as the project proceeds.

The Coordinator-General's report also approves Hancock Coal's proposed rail line from the mine to Abbot Point. The government has made it clear that we intend to facilitate and coordinate the development of transport infrastructure—and, indeed, all infrastructure in the Galilee Basin. Therefore, the government considers it critical for the development of the Galilee Basin that we provide certainty to all stakeholders. This means identifying preferred corridors which provide short-term staging options for railways as well as high-capacity transport solutions for the future. The Coordinator-General's approval today will bring those decisions into sharper focus.

The company plans to start work on the Alpha project and the necessary infrastructure next year and for it to become operational in 2016. Our government will work with them and the other proponents in the Galilee Basin to ensure that the benefits that can be derived from that great natural resource flow to all Queenslanders for generations to come.