



Speech by


Hon. Jeff Seeney

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Galilee Basin, Rail Transport

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (2.11 pm): The incredible mismanagement of the development of the Galilee Basin will long be remembered as part of the terrible legacy of the failed Labor government. It is a mismanagement that our government is determined to correct because we understand the economic benefits that the development of this great natural resource will bring to generations of Queenslanders. Today I want to address the issue of rail transport for the Galilee Basin. The previous government had allowed work to progress on six different railway proposals with no coordination at all from the government. The result has been a twisted mess of lines on a map, a lot of money wasted and no real progress towards an acceptable outcome for the proponents, for the local communities, for landholders or for the environment. Well before the election we made it very clear that if we were elected we would take action to resolve this absurdity, and we have since focused on the task of achieving a coordinated approach to Galilee Basin rail infrastructure.

Today I will be writing to all companies with interests in the Galilee Basin outlining our government's intentions to use our powers under the state development act to ensure a sensible outcome to this issue. After exhaustive negotiations with all of the proponents, we believe that the responsible development of the Galilee Basin can best be achieved by defining an east-west railway corridor as an extension of the existing QRN network and a north-south railway corridor to facilitate the construction of new standard gauge lines. Our government will support the declaration of state development areas, or SDAs, to define these two preferred corridors within which the government's powers of compulsory land acquisition will be exercised to bring about our clearly stated policy outcomes of a coordinated approach to railway development for the Galilee Basin.

Everyone should clearly understand that our government will be very unlikely to exercise our powers of compulsory land acquisition to establish railways outside these defined corridors. We would be very unlikely to compulsorily acquire land in a way that would bring about an outcome in contravention of our policy position. So our government will support the construction of an east-west railway line in a defined corridor connecting the central Galilee Basin to the existing QRN network near Moranbah. This will allow significant tonnages of Galilee Basin coal to be transported on the existing QRN coal line networks to ports at Abbot Point, Dalrymple Bay and Dudgeon Point. This proposal is currently being developed by both QRN and Adani and provides the best option for a staged, sensible, coordinated development of mine, rail and port capacity for Galilee Basin coal in the short term.

The construction of this east-west line will result in a significant extension to the existing QRN network west from Moranbah and a major increase in the tonnages carried on that existing QRN network. We will be negotiating with QRN and any other parties to the construction of the line to ensure that the new railway line operates under similar operating conditions and third-party access regimes as the existing QRN network. The required expansion of capacity on the existing QRN railway from Moranbah north to

Abbot Point will also be supported by the government to ensure it can transport the extra volumes of Galilee Basin coal. It will be the preferred transport corridor for proposed developments and expansions in the northern Bowen Basin and the long-awaited deviation around Collinsville will be a priority in the capacity expansions that will be necessary.

Mrs Menkens: Hear, hear!

Mr SEENEY: The member for Burdekin will be pleased about that. The government will also support an investigation into the upgrading of the existing QR line from Emerald to Alpha. This line can potentially be upgraded to provide access to the existing coal network and the port of Gladstone for the southern Galilee Basin proponents so that mines in that area can develop in stages and tonnages build up over time.

There are, however, some very large tonnages envisaged by the large vertically integrated mine proposals in the longer term from the Galilee Basin. To facilitate these large tonnages, the government will define a north-south corridor that straddles the alignment of the railway proposed by GVK-Hancock coal for the new 500-kilometre standard gauge line from its proposed Alpha coalmine north to Abbot Point. We will continue to work closely with GVK-Hancock and other mine proponents to ensure third-party access to this new line and negotiate with other proponents to ensure that they are not left disadvantaged by our essential moves to rectify the former government's failure to properly plan this key economic infrastructure for Queensland's future. We will ensure third-party access options to the new railway built in this preferred corridor as well as the option for other large mining proposals to co-locate their own new railway in that corridor if it proves to be more commercially viable for them to do so.

This is a sensible solution that is long overdue. It will achieve maximum transport efficiency with the minimum impact on local communities, landholders and the environment. I want to thank all of the Galilee Basin proponents for the full and frank discussions that we have had over the last two months that have allowed the negotiation of this outcome and I look forward to working with them to see the tremendous opportunity finally realised for the benefit of all Queenslanders.