



Speech by


Hon. Jeff Seeney

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Hansard Wednesday, 1 August 2012

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mary Valley

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (2.14 pm): Today I want to announce the next concrete step that the Newman government is taking to fix the foundations of the Mary Valley and its communities. The Mary Valley is a microcosm of the incompetent and wasteful administration that the Beattie and Bligh governments inflicted on this state. But after four years of abysmal neglect the people of the Mary Valley can be assured today that they have a government which supports them and is determined to see their valley once again become a productive part of the Queensland way of life. Today for the benefit of members I table the *Mary Valley economic development strategy*. It is a document and it is a prospectus outlining development opportunities and providing opportunities for investors to make a registration of interest.

Tabled paper: Mary Valley Economic Development Strategy Prospectus including economic development opportunities and registration of interests, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning [634].

The prospectus will detail the strategy that I outlined to the people of the Mary Valley 10 days ago. It will detail the economic development opportunities that exist to reintroduce the economic activity needed to renew the wasteland left by the Labor government and revive the communities that they devastated with their misguided Traveston Dam plan. The Traveston Dam was the sort of folly that epitomised the previous government. It was a folly that cost the people of Queensland—the taxpayers of Queensland—hundreds of millions of dollars, possibly a billion dollars. It was all wasted on a monumental debacle. As a result, there are now 13,000 hectares of land stretching across 468 properties owned by the Queensland government in the Mary Valley. There are also extensive water allocations available, and paired together these land and water assets represent a unique opportunity to create agricultural economic development opportunities.

The *Mary Valley economic development strategy* is a financially prudent way to do just that. The strategy aims to create conditions to enable private sector investment and development, building an economic backbone of economically viable agricultural enterprises which will in turn make the communities of the Mary Valley viable and vibrant once again. Properties will be aggregated and water rights realigned to create economically viable land units of sufficient size and to match the needs of agricultural enterprises wishing to establish in the valley.

Under an initial two-year program, this government will create economically viable agricultural units and pair them with the available water allocations to re-establish a commercially viable agricultural based economy in the Mary Valley. My department will work with the department of agriculture, we will work with the department of natural resources and we will be proactive in offering support and assistance to agricultural industries in the private sector to establish this economic backbone. We will also support the communities of the Mary Valley as the economy rebuilds. I have appointed the honourable member for Gympie as chair of the Mary Valley Economic Development Advisory Group to provide strong local input in the process and to ensure that local knowledge is made full use of in re-establishing the economy of the Mary Valley.

In contrast to the past government's failure and the lack of activity, last Friday we called for expressions of interest from parties interested in working with the government to implement projects in the Mary Valley. I can report that in the few days since we have had 103 inquiries, with about half of them asking about specific properties. But 103 inquiries in those few days would indicate there is a strong interest in land purchases in the Mary Valley. With this level of interest, it would indicate that the Mary Valley has a bright future. This government will get the Mary Valley back on track just as we will get Queensland back on track.