



Speech by


Hon. Jeff Seeney

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Hansard Wednesday, 22 August 2012

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Office of the Leader of the Opposition, Report; Galilee Basin

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (2.17 pm): I table the public report of office expenses for the Office of the Leader of the Opposition for the period 1 July 2011 to 23 March 2012.

Tabled paper: Public Report of Opposition Office Expenses for the period 1 July 2011 to 23 March 2012 [781].

Our government has a clear commitment to economic growth and a very clear policy to develop the Galilee Basin. Clive Palmer's China coal project is only one of a number of projects in the Galilee Basin and his comments in recent days have been misleading and I want to place some facts on the record today. The LNP had publicly espoused a clear position on proposed rail corridors in the Galilee Basin before, during and after the last state election. On taking government, I immediately initiated meetings and extensive discussions with all Galilee Basin mine proponents to find a solution to the hopeless mess that the previous Labor government had made of this important economic issue. I informed those proponents that it was the government's strong view that rail developments should be coordinated to achieve an efficient and cost-effective transport outcome—one that would minimise the impact on communities and landholders and provide the maximum benefit to all stakeholders in the Galilee Basin.

The government clearly indicated that its preference was for a common rail corridor, or corridors. I asked the various parties, including Clive Palmer's China First coal project, to enter into good-faith negotiations to see if they could agree among themselves to find an outcome on that basis. Unfortunately, they all informed me that they could not reach an agreement themselves. After further extensive discussions and consideration, I wrote to all mine and rail proponents in June to inform them that the government would support two rail corridors, an east-west alignment and a north-south alignment. I table for the benefit of members of the parliament a copy of that letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 6 June 2012, from the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, Hon. Jeff Seeney, to the Chairman of Mineralogy, Mr Palmer, regarding the Galilee Basin, proposed common rail corridors [782].

We sought to arrive at a result where all Galilee mine proponents would have an opportunity to pursue their projects. The east-west path would provide staged development of rail infrastructure for the short to medium term and the government's preference for this corridor was within the vicinity of the lines being pursued by both QRN and Adani. Given the advanced stage of the Alpha Coal Project, including the Coordinator-General's conditional approval of the proposal, the government would identify a north-south corridor in the vicinity of Alpha Coal Project's environmental impact statement study corridor. This policy position was based on a range of considerations, such as which projects were most advanced, which could provide opportunities to other parties, which could meet the government's broader policy objectives, and these considerations were clearly outlined in the correspondence to all parties.

On Friday, I received a rather confused letter from a law firm acting on behalf of Clive Palmer's China First project. I table a copy of that letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 17 August 2012, from HoggoodGanim Lawyers to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, Hon. Jeff Seeney, regarding Waratah Coal Pty Ltd and the Galilee Basin rail corridors [783].

The government has made it clear that it would support only two corridors. In other words, the government's power to compulsorily acquire land, if it were needed, would be exercised only to effect our policy outcome. The power to compulsorily acquire land would be exercised only in the areas that we identified. Indeed, it was also made clear that the government policy position was not an endorsement by the government of a particular project and any corridor established would also need to be available to other proponents.

The policy position does not preclude a mine proponent building a rail project somewhere else, but they will have to do so without government support. Indeed, I am advised that the Coordinator-General is currently assessing Clive Palmer's China First coal project for an environmental impact statement and for an infrastructure facility of significant application, as is the normal process. Let me add that the normal process has and will be followed through all developments in the Galilee Basin. Our government is very keen to deal with anyone interested in investing in the Galilee Basin—we are very keen to deal with anyone interested in investing in Queensland—but we will deal with all of those people on a fair and equal basis. We will deal with all of the proponents in the Galilee Basin on a fair and equal basis and Clive Palmer and his China First project will be dealt with exactly the same as every other proponent in the Galilee Basin.