



Speech By  
**Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk**


**MEMBER FOR INALA**

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Record of Proceedings, 18 August 2016

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

### **Beef Industry**

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.42 am): My government is committed to supporting projects that will deliver jobs for Queenslanders and generate economic prosperity for our state. That is why in April the Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games and the Treasurer announced we would deliver a boost for our state's beef industry. My government is investing \$2.5 million to support the expansion of Oakey Beef Exports by upgrading rail sidings on the western line and reopening part of an old branch line that was closed in 1994.

I am pleased to announce today that work has started on this \$2.5 million project to upgrade rail infrastructure in South-West Queensland and support the company's multimillion dollar expansion. By upgrading rail infrastructure in the region we will ensure Oakey Beef can streamline its operations and move more cattle to Oakey. This injection of funds from the government will open up more economic opportunities for beef producers and allow them to put their stock on the rail line. According to the South West Regional Economic Development Association, my government's investment will allow the company to reinstate rail freight movements and unlock the economic potential for a \$1.3 billion uplift in activity around the region and support more than 4,300 jobs. This investment will generate significant economic benefits within Oakey and surrounding areas, delivering a major boost for regional jobs and bolstering economic confidence in this region.

This project reflects my government's commitment to invest in getting more freight on rail and to support jobs growth for Queensland. Over the coming months Queensland Rail crews will work to upgrade a rail siding at Mitchell and re-open a section of the old Cecil Plains branch line that has been out of service for more than 10 years. The upgrade will allow cattle services to operate from Quilpie, Charleville, Morven, Roma and Mitchell to Oakey, which is critical to allow Oakey Beef Exports to double its output. The works to re-open the Cecil Plains branch line will first involve removing the old track and completing earthworks before crews work to construct 1.3 kilometres of upgraded track, laying more than 1,900 sleepers.

My government supports Queensland's beef industry and understands it is a vital contributor to our state's economy, particularly to our regional economies. In 2014-15 cattle production generated more than \$4.2 billion for the Queensland economy, which is more than 27 per cent of Queensland's total gross value in agricultural production at the farm gate. Our state is a world leader in beef production, currently the fifth largest beef exporter in the world with total exports worth approximately \$4.9 billion during this past year.

**Mr Cripps** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Hinchinbrook, you are warned under standing order 253A for your interjections. They are not called for. If you persist I will take the appropriate action.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is why Queensland Rail will continue to work with Oakey Beef Exports to look for further opportunities to upgrade rail infrastructure on the western line to facilitate further growth for freight in South-West Queensland.