




Speech By
Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Record of Proceedings, 28 November 2019

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

North West Minerals Province

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (2.57 pm): Earlier this year I had the opportunity to undertake some mine visits in the North West Minerals Province. I called in to Dugald River, Phosphate Hill, Cannington Mine and Ernest Henry, some of the great mines in that region that are producing some of our outstanding exports. We are seeing products like zinc, lead, phosphate, copper and gold going out from these particular mines. The North West Minerals Province is essential for Queensland's economy. In fact, up until September this year Queensland exports topped \$87.6 billion. What we see coming out of the North West Minerals Province is critical to the economy and our employment opportunities.

Last week the Premier took the cabinet to Mount Isa. There were some announcements while they were there, including \$13.8 million in funding for rare earth minerals. The announcement comprised of \$4.8 million to re-examine old mine tailings and core samples for new age minerals and \$9 million to unearth more and better geological information to help industry identify new projects.

It is important to know that those rare earth minerals are our future, particularly in the North West Minerals Province. While we are not going to stop mining zinc and copper throughout that area, this is another tranche of mining that will create more jobs for the people in the area. We have already seen some outstanding funding in the North West Minerals Province. In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, as you would have heard, earlier this year around 300 kilometres of the rail line was decimated. The estimated time to repair that line was 11 months. In fact, within nine weeks the work done had the line functioning again at 100 per cent. That is an outstanding achievement by the rail workers. That work has also reduced travel time by 50 minutes. The budget contains \$39 million for the North West Queensland Economic Diversification Strategy, \$380 million in previous funding commitments for the north-west rail line and—a great one for me—an \$80 million funding commitment to reduce rail access charges, which is what the miners were telling me: reduce the costs, get the trucks off the roads, get the freight onto the rail line and create more opportunities for our kids and a real career path for their future.