




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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MOTION

Coronavirus, Economic Response

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing) (4.37 pm): I rise to support the motion tonight. The Palaszczuk government will always support regional Queensland. Yesterday's announcement by the Premier of the Queensland Economic Recovery Strategy underlined that commitment once again. There is plenty for regional Queenslanders to look forward to as part of this package. When our regions do well, all of Queensland does well.

There is a \$400 million Accelerated Works Program to deliver new road, bridge and pavement sealing works right across the state—sealing regional roads right across the state. They are important works that will employ local regional workers. There is \$14.8 million allocated to the CopperString project—which I am glad to hear the opposition support tonight—to continue its important development and to prepare for construction in 2021. That is a huge win for regional Queensland. For the North Queensland members who are here today, that will bring huge job opportunities for North Queenslanders and their communities. We are opening up the North West Minerals Province to provide critical resources for both domestic and international markets. That has the potential to inject nearly \$80 billion into the economy over the next 10 years.

I was pleased to see some positive comments from people in North Queensland. An editorial in the *Townsville Bulletin* stated—

Projects like these are perfect ways to help the region's economy as we work our way out of the coronavirus pandemic and back to prosperity.

Mr Harper: Front page!

Mr BUTCHER: I will take that interjection; it was the front page. CopperString chairman John O'Brien said—

CopperString will drive significant improvements in our global competitiveness and secure our reputation as one of the world's leading suppliers of new economy minerals.

MITEZ CEO Glen Graham said—

The lower cost of energy is probably going to be the game changer that will enable a reasonable number of new mines to open up.

Regional Development Australia, Townsville and North Queensland thanked the Queensland Government for 'taking the next step forward in this exciting project for our region'.

It was amazing to hear about another \$200 million. I note that the member for Glass House said it is 'only' \$200 million and it is not close to their \$600 million, but I remind him that this is the third tranche of Works for Queensland and it now totals \$600 million—just as you asked for—in funding for regional councils to get work on the ground and deliver the local projects they so badly need. We know how much local councils love this program and, as I said, with the third round it now totals \$600 million. This funding will get local shovel-ready projects moving right now, delivering local jobs and improving local infrastructure for local councils.