




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Regional Queensland, Jobs; Valeria Mine

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing) (10.02 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to creating long-term, secure jobs for regional Queenslanders. It has always been a focus for our government and it continues to be a critical part of our plan to unite and recover as we rebound from the global coronavirus pandemic. That is why last week I was pleased to stand with the member for Rockhampton, Barry O'Rourke, and the member for Keppel, Brittany Lauga, to announce that a new \$1.5 billion coal mining project in Central Queensland's Bowen Basin is a step closer to being realised.

The new Valeria coalmine was declared a coordinated project last week by Queensland's independent Coordinator-General. The mine will produce a mix of both metallurgical coal, used for iron and steel production, and thermal coal. Not only will this new coalmine create up to 1,400 jobs during its construction phase but also it will require a workforce of up to 950 full-time workers to operate it across the planned 35-year life span of the mine. This is great news for the Central Queensland region.

As part of the Coordinator-General's declaration, the proponent is now required to prepare a comprehensive environmental impact statement for the project. The Coordinator-General will undertake a rigorous assessment of all environmental, social and economic impacts, including extensive community consultation during the process. Queensland has comprehensive protections for the environment in the nation and, like all projects, this project must stack up environmentally before gaining any approvals. The proponent has already advised that any thermal coal produced by the new mine will be subject to the company's cap on thermal coal output, to support global transition to a low carbon economy.

Queensland's Bowen Basin region produces the best metallurgical coal on the planet. While COVID-19 is putting pressure on economies right around the world, this project shows that major companies are still keen to invest in Queensland and to back Queensland jobs. Major projects like this also provide Queensland businesses with the confidence that there are good opportunities to grow their own ventures into the future. Through my department we are working with industry stakeholders to support economic recovery right across the state.

I want to thank the Office of the Coordinator-General for its rigorous handling of the project's approvals process so far. I look forward to further updating the House on how this government is growing the Queensland economy through infrastructure and resource projects, particularly in regional Queensland.