




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Resources Industry

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing) (9.59 am): These are certainly tough times across the world. Economies from Asia to Europe to the Americas are feeling the effects of the COVID pandemic. Thankfully, here in Queensland we have had a world-class health response. This is testament to the leadership of the Premier, the Deputy Premier and Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, but it would not have been possible without the hard work and sacrifice of all Queenslanders. We should be proud of our response, which now means that we can start delivering our economic recovery plan for the state.

Our plan to unite and recover is focused on getting Queenslanders into jobs now and building economic resilience to position our state for a bright future in an uncertain world. That is why we are investing in projects that will deliver long-term benefits to the state and secure jobs for Queenslanders—projects such as the \$1.5 billion Australian Mines' Sconi project for North Queensland which, as the Premier said, we are supporting through our Jobs and Regional Growth Fund. The new mine near Greenvale will extract cobalt, nickel and scandium oxide to create 500 construction jobs and almost 300 jobs during its operation. These jobs will require a highly skilled workforce and provide apprenticeships for young Queenslanders in the growing new-economy minerals sector.

While the resource sector is a traditional strength of Queensland, our government believes that we can do more than dig up just minerals; we can process and manufacture them to become world leaders in battery production and new economy minerals. That is why our support for the project is conditional on Australian Mines securing a 100 per cent offtake agreement and ensuring the minerals are processed right here in Queensland. Australian Mines will establish its head office in Brisbane, and it expects to award key construction related contracts by the end of this year. The company estimates that construction should be complete by mid-2023. Once developed, Australian Mines believes the project will be one of the most cost-competitive cobalt-producing nickel operations not only in Australia but the world. The project means jobs for North Queenslanders in industries of the future.