




Speech By
Colin Boyce

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 24 March 2021

ADJOURNMENT

Surat Basin, Rail Infrastructure

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (7.12 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House the Surat Basin rail project and the need to build the missing link railway line from Wandoan to Banana and replace the existing rail line from Miles to Wandoan in the Callide electorate. The project is an extension of the inland rail proposal from Brisbane to Melbourne. Should it be built, it would complete the heavy gauge rail link from Brisbane to the Port of Gladstone. The inland rail options clearly show that the Port of Gladstone is a far better choice than the Port of Brisbane. Gladstone's location alone and the reduced freight costs from Singapore to Shanghai are enough reason to progress this as a major project. The Port of Gladstone has the capability to accommodate large, modern container ships, similar to Port Botany near Sydney. The removal of coal trains from Brisbane suburbs would be an added benefit.

The Surat Basin coal link also unlocks the potential for Glencore's New Hope coalmine at Wandoan. Coupled with the Nathan Gorge Dam at Taroom, Australia's largest shovel-ready water infrastructure project with a capacity of 880,000 megalitres, it would allow the expansion of high-value food production and increase Australia's capacity to produce first-class, clean, fresh food for the state, the nation and the world. The building of the Nathan Gorge Dam would also solve the chronic water shortage problems of the Darling Downs, particularly the Dalby, Toowoomba, Warwick and Stanthorpe regions. With ever-increasing urban expansion and population growth in these inland areas, it is imperative that another viable water storage be built.

It is crucial that transport links are prioritised to realise the potential expansion of the agricultural, mining, resource and energy sectors of Central Queensland. The Port of Gladstone and the Central Queensland region are being developed as a future hydrogen energy hub. It is a no-brainer that the Surat Basin railway needs to be built to connect this future energy production hub to the energy hungry southern states.

If the government is serious about generating wealth-creating jobs and guiding Queensland to a viable economic future, these projects need to be given priority. The ability to look forward and assess the needs and requirements of the future is about having a plan and then putting that plan into motion. There are three essential ingredients to the economic success of Queensland: transport, water and power. Every journey starts with the first step. I urge the government to take the step, build the missing Surat Basin railway line and start Queensland on the journey to prosperity.