



Speech By
Hon. Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Record of Proceedings, 31 August 2021


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Transport and Resources Committee, Report

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (6.53 pm): I welcome the tabling of the Transport and Resources Committee report into the proposed budget appropriations for 2021-22. I acknowledge the committee's recommendations that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the budget bills, be agreed to without amendment. I would also like to thank the chair, committee members, my department and all those who participated in the hearing for taking part in this important role of our parliamentary system.

The resources industry is a traditional strength of Queensland and it has shown how essential it is during the global pandemic. It is a key part of Queensland's economic recovery, and right now it directly supports 85,000 people in work and more than 15,200 businesses. This is a record—the largest number of people ever employed in the resources sector in Queensland. It is evidence of the Palaszczuk government's effective leadership supporting the industry as a job creator and an economic driver. The industry has worked closely with the government through these uncertain times. To date, there has not been one single case of COVID in the resources sector—which is testament to how serious they treat this. The resources sector generates billions of dollars in royalties which allows us to invest in our health system, our schools and our roads.

To set out a strong vision for the sector, the Palaszczuk government is investing more than \$42 million into Queensland's resources sector and land programs as part of the 2021-22 state budget. The government will continue to support the resources industry with this investment which will help the sector continue as a key driver of our economic recovery plan from COVID-19. We will continue to help explorers discover new opportunities through our popular Collaborative Exploration Initiative, with the latest round of this awarded in July this year. These grants are important because supporting the exploration industry is vital for finding new deposits, creating new opportunities and developing new projects—which means more royalties, more exports and more jobs for Queenslanders.

Gas is also a key part of the resource industry, and that is why we are looking at potential new opportunities in that space. In June this year we announced the initial concept phase of the \$5 million Bowen Basin gas pipeline study, which is now underway. This work is continuing and will investigate the potential pipeline and infrastructure to improve delivery of Bowen Basin gas to the domestic and export markets. There are already thousands of jobs in the gas industry and this work could provide hundreds more. Just this month Senex Energy announced a multimillion dollar expansion of its Project

Atlas operations. This \$40 million investment means the company will increase gas production by 50 per cent, or 18 petajoules of natural gas per year. More importantly, the expansion will create 100 jobs and inject around \$15 million into nearby regional communities such as Wandoan and Roma.

We are also providing relief in other areas of my portfolio which is particularly important during COVID-19. We have given rent reprieve to weather affected primary producers in our state because we know how important they are in our economic recovery. The 2021-22 budget will deliver \$3.2 million in land rent rebates to support landholders who are still struggling with drought. In addition to this, drought declared landholders will be granted a hardship deferral for required rent payments. This is important and tangible on-the-ground support for a key part of this state's economy.

Also, as part of my department's work, we continue to engage with stakeholders as we develop the Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan. This important work will help shape the resources industry in the years to come and will examine not only new challenges but also new opportunities for the sector. The QRIDP will provide a clear vision for industry regarding the exciting future of mining in Queensland and will provide greater certainty for investors, both domestic and international.

Under the Palaszczuk government, there has been \$21 billion invested or committed to resources projects which has created more than 8,000 jobs. The search for new economy minerals will continue with the assistance of our Collaborative Exploration Initiative grants. These new economy minerals are increasingly in demand as the global energy transition continues.

The 2021-22 Queensland budget proves the Palaszczuk government understands the importance of the resources sector and will continue to back new opportunities in the industry. It provides investment, opportunities, jobs and vision for the resources sector, and it is vital to delivering our COVID-19 economic recovery plan.

(Time expired)