



Speech By
Hon. Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Record of Proceedings, 17 August 2022


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) (12.49 pm): I would like to correct the record while I am on my feet. Previously I said I was at a sod turning at Winchester South. I was actually at a site visit at Whitehaven Coal with the Whitehaven Coal CEO and Isaac Regional Council Mayor Anne Baker.

I welcome the tabling of the Transport and Resources Committee report into the proposed budget appropriations for the 2022-23 financial year. 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, the GasFields Commission, the Land Access Ombudsman, Resources Safety and Health Queensland, my ministerial staff and all those who participated in, and prepared for, the hearing. The estimates process is fundamental to transparency, accountability and our Westminster system of government. As the Minister for Resources, the safety of Queensland's resources workforce continues to be my No. 1 priority. I would like to thank the independent regulator, Resources Safety and Health Queensland, for the work it continues to do in that area.

As announced during estimates, the Transport and Resources Committee will initiate an inquiry into how the coal industry has acted on recommendations from the Coal Mining Board of Inquiry, which examined the explosion that took place at the Grosvenor mine in 2020, leaving five people seriously injured. I look forward to that progressing and thank the committee in advance for taking on this important work.

My portfolio is one of the major economic drivers of this state, whether it is through our administration and management of land or our leadership and advocacy for, and regulation of, the resources industry. With less than 10 years to the Olympics, my department will play an essential part in utilising state land to support our Olympic venues and transport infrastructure, which will help continue to support and improve the great lifestyle we have right here in Queensland.

My department is already taking the necessary steps to ensure that extractive resources like sand and gravel will be available and accessible to support the necessary construction and development for the games. My department is leading the transformation and diversification of our multibillion dollar resources industry to ensure good jobs for Queenslanders and economic prosperity well beyond 2032.

The Palaszczuk government is backing this effort with almost \$80 million in the 2022-23 budget across both the georesources and lands divisions of my department. The big ticket item is the almost \$40 million that will transform Queensland's fledgling new economy minerals sector into a long-term pit-to-product mega industry. This is an investment in future good jobs for Queenslanders, particularly for the students we have in the gallery here today—jobs in regional communities so that kids in school now can build rewarding, well-paid careers without having to leave their regional towns and cities. This is a transformative investment in this state's future, underpinned by the Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan.

Working with industry and our community, this budget lays the foundations for a transformation that will see Queensland do more than produce minerals for the world: we will process and manufacture with our rich mineral endowment, generating high-skilled, highly paid long-term jobs. It all starts with exploration. This budget continues the government's longstanding commitment to driving exploration, increasingly focusing on the new economy minerals needed for renewable energy and advanced technologies. Included in the almost \$40 million is an additional \$17.5 million over four years for exploration, particularly for new economy minerals, taking total investment over five years to \$22.6 million.

Our new economy minerals are what the world is demanding right now, and we have the opportunity to capitalise on this as world economies look to decarbonise. Mr Deputy Speaker, you cannot have a renewable energy industry without a resources sector. That is why this government continues to support the industry.

Also, this budget provides \$15 million over two years for airborne and ground based geophysical surveys and research to better define our new economy minerals potential. Mackay's Resources Centre of Excellence, which I visited with the Treasurer earlier this year, will receive \$5.7 million over three years to add a future industries delivery hub. They will be able to expand their existing services including providing critical mineral testing and commercialisation for new economy minerals.

As I said, my department also performs a critical role in land administration. Significantly, this budget provides an annual \$10 million for a Natural Resources Recovery Program, which will allow the department to support better sustainable productivity and jobs from Queensland's land resources. Despite flooding rain across parts of the state, almost 45 per cent of Queensland remains drought-declared, so we will continue to back our drought stricken producers.

(Time expired)