



Speech By  
**Hon. Scott Stewart**


**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 November 2023

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Townsville Electorate**

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (2.52 pm): God bless the teachers. Right now there is huge confidence in Townsville and its future and that is in no small part thanks to the government's backing of CopperString 2032. I have said it before and I will say it again: CopperString is not just a game changer for Townsville; it is the game. It will open up huge opportunities for developing and growing critical mineral deposits in North Queensland. When community cabinet was held in Townsville two weeks ago, the Premier announced a \$1.3 billion package to progress work on CopperString 2032. This will help unlock potentially \$500 billion of critical minerals in the North West Minerals Province. We know that when the north-west is booming so is Townsville. Whether it is through the port or through our local businesses and services, it makes a huge difference to Townsville. This means good jobs for Townsville.

It is not just the critical minerals projects that will benefit from CopperString 2032 either. The Lansdown Eco-Industrial Precinct is set to benefit from this 1,100-kilometre long, high-voltage electricity transmission network. There are huge opportunities at the precinct, including QEM's TECH project along with Quinbrook Infrastructure Partners state-of-the-art polysilicon manufacturing facility. This project was announced by the Townsville City Council the same week that community cabinet was held in the city. Mayor Jenny Hill put it succinctly when talking to the media. She said—

To have the renewable energy coming in through Copperstring, that announcement is really critical. It's like moving all the pieces in a jigsaw and finally getting them all together.

For the kids sitting in our classroom today, CopperString 2032 means there are jobs in their town. There are jobs that will be created now and right into the future. It is the Palaszczuk government that will continue to invest in infrastructure projects that will power Townsville and the north now and into the future. All this is at risk because of the LNP's plans for cuts. We know they do not support our progressive coal royalties beyond 2024, which means CopperString 2032 is gone. It means the fast-tracked Moranbah hospital is gone. It means the Townsville University Hospital upgrades are gone. The list is endless.

It is about time the opposition revealed what else is on the chopping block. The LNP do not support the people in Townsville getting their fair share from a commodity that Queenslanders own because they are at the whim of the Queensland Resources Council. At least the federal shadow resources minister was honest and up-front about her views on progressive coal royalties and it is about time the Leader of the Opposition had the same gumption. The Palaszczuk government is backing Townsville, it is backing our regions and, in fact, it is backing all of Queensland. We have a plan to deliver the services and the infrastructure a growing Queensland needs.

While I am on my feet and I am talking about great opportunities ahead for Townsville it would be remiss of me not to talk about the bumper year ahead for Townsville and the Queensland Country Bank Stadium. In the last seven days it was announced that the NRL All Stars game and game 3 of the Women's State of Origin will be played in Townsville next year.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr STEWART:** Thank you. I take that interjection. These two games are collectively expected to draw in excess of 15,000 visitors to Townsville, pumping \$8 million into the visitor economy. Townsville embraced the Women's State of Origin this year with a monster crowd of 18,275 people, so to have the deciding game in the events capital of North Australia will be absolutely fantastic.

Seeing Townsville on the national stage hosting blockbuster sporting and live music events was our vision for the stadium beyond just a Cowboys home ground and the reason we built it. It is safe to say that we are now delivering on that. Next year we have Pink coming as well who will perform in two concerts, which is a huge drawcard for the north. Townsville is the events capital of North Australia and seeing it come alive with epic events is great for the local economy and engages more visitors to experience everything our incredible region has to offer from Townsville to Ingham to the Burdekin and out to Charters Towers. This is why the Palaszczuk government built the stadium, because it brings the city alive and is a huge boost for our local businesses.