




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

North-West Queensland Floods, Recovery; CopperString 2.0; Renewable Energy

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure) (9.42 am): Our thoughts are with the people of Burke shire as they grapple with the devastating flood currently affecting that region. The Queensland Reconstruction Authority's new CEO, Major General Jake Ellwood, started work this week and he is on the ground in Mount Isa today to get a firsthand look at the recovery efforts for the gulf and north-west flooding. Today Jake will meet with the district disaster coordinator and the Mount Isa mayor as well as visit the recovery hub to offer our government's full support to the community.

North Queensland is an economic powerhouse. The \$5 billion CopperString power transmission project the Premier announced while cabinet was in Townsville last week will open up new supply chains from Mount Isa through to Townsville. Eight hundred direct jobs will be supported during six years of construction, and there will be another 50 ongoing operations and maintenance jobs. We are not willing to settle for just the jobs in construction; we want to create jobs in the supply chain, too. There will be 1,900 transmission towers required for this project. We want to manufacture those towers in Queensland, multiplying the economic dividend for Queenslanders out of this \$5 billion investment, creating a new manufacturing industry for Queensland. At the beginning of the year I visited TEi Services, a local Townsville company working on a Powerlink transmission line project. They told me they were able to employ 10 apprentices thanks to the constant investment from the Palaszczuk government into the region—and that was before we announced CopperString.

Queensland has the sun and the wind to power our statewide SuperGrid. Soon we will have Queensland-made vanadium flow batteries to store this renewable energy. Thanks to support from the Palaszczuk government's Industry Partnership Program, Townsville will soon have Australia's first commercial-scale vanadium flow battery electrolyte manufacturing facility. Commercial-scale batteries are an essential part of decarbonising our electricity network. Vanadium flow batteries are proven, grid-scale energy storage solutions with advantages including a long lifespan, lengthy storage capability and non-flammability. Vecco Group's facility will produce nine megalitres of electrolyte annually—that equates to an energy storage capacity of 175 megawatt hours—with plans to double the output to 350 megawatt hours. The facility is expected to start production later this year, providing jobs for 21 people. The facility will support the development of Vecco Group's Debella critical minerals mine near Julia Creek. The creation of a North Queensland battery industry supply chain is a key part of the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan. We will mine critical minerals, process them and make batteries, including vanadium flow batteries, right here in Queensland. Vecco is just one of the companies recognising the potential of Queensland's renewable energy future.

Last week the Premier also announced the Lansdown Eco-Industrial Precinct had been declared a prescribed project. Lansdown is set to be Northern Australia's first environmentally sustainable industrial hub. Six companies have already signed on to be part of the precinct including renewable

hydrogen and advanced battery manufacturing. The precinct will deliver a local jobs boom—5,000 during construction and an estimated 1,600 direct and 9,100 indirect jobs once projects located there are up and running. Lansdown is jointly funded by the Australian government and the Palaszczuk government in partnership with the Townsville City Council.