




Speech By
Hon. Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 26 August 2025

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; PRIMARY
INDUSTRIED AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE, REPORT**

 **Hon. DR LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development) (7.57 pm): I want to take this opportunity to again highlight the excellent work that my Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development is delivering for Queenslanders each and every day. I will try to clear up some of the misconceptions of those opposite.

When it comes to the coal industry, the only people in this House confused about that sector are those opposite. We went to the election stating that there would be no changes to the current royalty regime this term, and that has not changed. There is also no change to our support for the industry. On this side of the House we back the coal sector 100 per cent. We stand with Queensland's hardworking coalmining families in Central and North Queensland—unlike those opposite such as the member for Cooper, who sided with the Greens and attended anti-coal workshops, or the shadow resources minister, who failed to meet with a single coal company for the first six months of this term, or the former treasurer, whose anti-coal policies decimated confidence in the industry and drove investment off a cliff. That was the same former treasurer who knew that Glencore was closing its Mount Isa Mines business and knew that Glencore's copper smelter was in trouble. What did he do? Absolutely nothing! Glencore told those opposite in 2023 that that smelter was closing and what did they do? Absolutely nothing! That is because those opposite do not care about regional Queensland. Saving Mount Isa has been at the top of my to-do list since day one. I met Glencore's global CEO, Gary Nagle, in the first fortnight after coming to government and our engagement has been ongoing—

Mr Power interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr O'Shea): Member for Logan, please address any comments through the chair.

Mr LAST: Our engagement has been ongoing ever since. Our government has put an offer on the table to Glencore in support of the Mount Isa community and we are working in lock step with the federal government as they finalise their offer. This is the most important issue on my desk, and I make no apologies about engaging the best and the brightest, whether that is from our department or external contractors, to make sure that we achieve the best possible outcome for the Mount Isa community, the North West Minerals Province and Queenslanders more broadly. The ongoing operation of the copper smelter and the Townsville refinery are of national importance and deserve a national solution.

Labor could have resolved this issue months before the 2024 election, but it turned a blind eye—like it turned a blind eye to the Queensland Train Manufacturing Program. The timeline for the delivery of the trains being built under QTMP has not changed from the timeline that our government inherited from those opposite in October 2024. The first trains are on schedule to enter passenger service in 2027 and all 65 trains are on track to be in service before the 2032 Olympics. The QTMP will support more than 1,300 jobs over the life of the program. At the end of July 2025 there were more than 350

full-time workers on site as part of the construction of the Torbanlea train manufacturing facility, and nearly 150 of these are Fraser Coast locals.

In July, Downer commenced a public recruitment process to ensure that the first intake of workers are ready for when train manufacturing commences at Torbanlea in early 2026, and this is where the rubber hits the road for the Fraser Coast. There will be 200 new blue-collar jobs. Fitters, boilermakers and trades assistants will be some of the first to be onboarded at Torbanlea followed by electrical trades and painters. There will also be 100 new white-collar jobs. These roles will include engineering, safety operations, human resources management and administrative roles and at least 35 apprentices and seven trainees, and another 80 positions supporting the delivery of the QTMP will be recruited on the Fraser Coast and across Queensland by Downer's major subcontractors.

We are backing Queensland's manufacturing industry through a \$79.1 million investment into the new Transforming Queensland Manufacturing Program—\$79.1 million. We are delivering the \$9.5 billion Queensland Train Manufacturing Program and \$10 million for two new manufacturing hubs. We have opened the Toowoomba hub and planning for the Sunshine Coast location is well advanced. We are backing mining exploration with a \$5.1 million investment in targeted geoscientific activities and we have opened up nine new areas for gas exploration across the Cooper, Eromanga, Bowen and Surat basins to boost future supply. We are getting on with the job. We are about creating employment in this state and we will continue to do so.