



Speech By
Hon. Dale Last
MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Resources Industries, BHP

 **Hon. DR LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development) (2.14 pm): After a decade of decline in the relationship between the mining sector and the Queensland government, I rise to reaffirm the Crisafulli government's unwavering support for Queensland's coal industry and for the thousands of hardworking men and women who rely on it. Coal has built modern Queensland. It powers our homes, drives our industry and provides well-paid jobs that sustain regional communities across the Bowen and Galilee basins.

At the front of my mind today are the workers of BHP impacted by job losses across its Queensland operations, particularly those working at its Saraji South mine. BHP's decision to place the Saraji South mine into care and maintenance is a difficult day for those families, communities and contractors who depend on that operation. My thoughts, and the thoughts of this government, are with every worker affected. They deserved better from BHP.

This decision is ultimately a commercial one by BHP, reflecting the low margins at that particular mine. However, when a company makes a commercial decision to wind back production, the impact is felt across those communities. I must bring to the attention of the House the un-Australian decision of BHP to review the FutureFit Academy. It is a slap in the face to the people who want to commit to their future in the coalmining sector. That is why the Crisafulli government is so determined to rebuild confidence and attract new investment.

Let me be clear: Queensland coal has a strong future. Global demand for Queensland coal is projected to remain strong for decades, particularly in our export markets. Steel producers in places like India and Japan want our metallurgical coal. Those nations are not just demanding more coal; they are demanding Queensland coal because it is high quality, efficient and produced under world-leading environmental and safety standards. That demand presents an enormous opportunity for this state if we get the policy settings right.

Under the Crisafulli government, we are doing exactly that. Through our Resources Cabinet Committee, we are cutting red tape, delivering faster and clearer decisions, and ensuring projects are not left in limbo, and we are already seeing results. Bravus has announced a major expansion of the Carmichael Mine, the first stage of a half a billion dollar program that will create 600 jobs. That expansion will deliver critical infrastructure like new accommodation, water storage and rail maintenance facilities, providing more work for suppliers in Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton. That is what confidence looks like; that is what certainty brings. We have made it clear: investment is welcome in Queensland. We back coal, and we back coal jobs.

Contrast this with the decade of decline Queenslanders saw from the former Labor government. Labor's unpredictable policies drove investment off a cliff. They dithered and delayed approvals. They let inner-city activists dictate their agenda, while regional workers paid the price. The Crisafulli government is committed to restoring Queensland's reputation as a place to invest by delivering certainty and stability. We are ensuring coal communities know their government is on their side.

Coal jobs are Queensland jobs. They are the dragline operator in Moranbah, the truck driver in Blackwater, the apprentice in Rockhampton and the small business owner in Mackay. These jobs sustain towns, fund hospitals and schools, and underpin our state's prosperity. That is why the Crisafulli government will always back coal. It is why we will continue to fight for coal jobs, and it is why we will keep backing those coal communities who now have a government that backs them.