



Speech By
Hon. Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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ADJOURNMENT

Bowen Regional Forum

 **Hon. DR LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development) (9.21 pm): History shows that Bowen in the mighty Burdekin electorate was a contender to become the capital of a new state when Queensland separated from New South Wales all those many years ago. The town has a proud history, but in the last week the focus has been on Bowen's future.

Last Thursday in my role as the Minister for Regional and Rural Development I hosted the Crisafulli government's third regional forum in Bowen, and it was very well received by that community. Outside the rain fell, but inside the Bowen PCYC we shined a light on Bowen's potential guided by a presentation from students from Bowen State High School who highlighted the importance of making the right decisions.

In direct contrast to what we saw under the previous government, the Crisafulli government is engaging directly and genuinely with business and community leaders right across regional Queensland. As the CEO of Bowen Gumlu Growers, Jenn Honnery, said—

Place-based conversations like the Bowen Regional Forum are invaluable for bringing local voices together, strengthening partnerships and shaping practical solutions that support long-term regional economic development.

The days of people flying in, telling the community what to do and then leaving without a meaningful contribution are over. We are working cooperatively with communities to recognise both the challenges that communities face and the potential benefits, because unlocking potential provides benefits throughout communities and throughout the state. I would like to acknowledge Coordinator-General Gerard Coggan, Director-General Sally Stannard and DDG of Sport Sarah Vandersee, who not only participated in the forum but also engaged directly with local community groups, paving the way to unlock even more opportunities for the community.

The Crisafulli government is not just listening; we are delivering for Queensland. The following day we announced that Arup would undertake the master planning of the Bowen boat harbour. That is right: an internationally recognised consultancy firm helping to transform Bowen's potential into reality. From world-class stadiums to the Brisbane International Cruise Terminal and the renewal of the Sydney Opera House, Arup has runs on the board in Australia and will bring its expertise to Bowen and this long-awaited project. Importantly, the master planning of the Bowen boat harbour will build on the Bowen Jetty redevelopment and plans for the iconic foreshore to provide real opportunities for both business and tourism.

Just as we have for communities across Queensland, the Crisafulli government is delivering for Bowen. I look forward to delivering a brighter future for the residents of Bowen and the surrounding areas. When you think about the opportunities there with the Gilmour Space station, with the state development area, with the Water for Bowen project, with the horticultural development—which you are

well aware of, Mr Deputy Speaker Furner, given your former role around the Bowen area—and the Bowen Rail Co., the future is looking very bright for that community and I could not have been happier to be there.