

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 541

asked on Wednesday, 24 March 2010

MRS KIERNAN ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES, MINES AND ENERGY AND MINISTER FOR TRADE (MR ROBERTSON)—

QUESTION:

As mining is the lifeblood of Mount Isa and the North West Mineral Province and considering its economic importance for the sustainability of our region—

What steps are being taken to ensure mining regions like the Isa continue to grow and prosper?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The Bligh Government continues to stimulate exploration in Queensland through the acquisition of new geoscientific data and by providing grants to industry through our \$29.08 million Smart Mining – Future Prosperity program.

Initiatives under this grants program are helping to kick-start exploration in parts of the State that are either unexplored or under-explored. That is important because expanding the frontiers of exploration helps unearth the next generation of mines and mining jobs so vital to our economic prosperity.

The Smart Mining – Future Prosperity program has already proven successful in attracting new exploration investment to Queensland.

For example, exploration investment in Queensland has increased nearly fourfold during the life of the grants program – from \$244.3 million in calendar year 2004 to \$751.4 million in the 12 months to December 2009.

I am pleased to advise that a further nine exploration companies will share \$928,000 in Queensland Government grants under our Collaborative Drilling Initiative.

Round four of this program will support targeted drilling for 11 exploration projects throughout the State.

The Member will be very happy to learn nine of the projects are based in north and north-west Queensland, and two in the western part of the state.

Collaborative drilling grants bring government and industry together to accelerate testing of geological targets by drilling in under-explored parts of Queensland.

Each of the 11 projects receiving grants best demonstrate innovative exploration ideas or are located in currently under-explored areas.

New concepts in brownfield areas of Queensland are also supported and grants are available to mineral and energy explorers.

The mining industry employs many thousands of Queenslanders and provides economic benefits that underpin the economic prosperity of our communities.

That is why the Bligh Government is committed to continuing to support a strong and sustainable Queensland mining industry through grants programs such as the Collaborative Drilling Initiative.