Question on Notice
No. 511
Asked on 24 May 2022

Mr M Berkman asked Premier and Minister for the Olympics (Hon. A Palaszczuk)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the CSIRO and QUT ‘A New Chapter’ report on emerging industries for Queensland, released in 2021—

Will the Premier advise (a) does the government stand by its commitment to support that report's findings, including the opportunities identified for manufacturing green steel to replace coal export revenue, (b) has the government assessed the extent to which new metallurgical coal mine approvals create direct competition against the green steel industry the government hopes to support, (c) what is the government’s plan to ensure new metallurgical coal mine approvals do not hamper Queensland's ability to become a leader in green steel and (d) does the government have a plan to transition coal workers whose jobs are 'under threat' into the green metals manufacturing industry?

ANSWER:

(a) The Queensland Government supports developing new high value jobs in emerging sectors as outlined in the ‘A New Chapter’ report on ‘Opportunities to seed new industries for Queensland over the coming decade’. This report closely aligns with the Queensland Government’s economic plan to create good jobs in more industries across Queensland. The Queensland Government is committed to establishing renewables manufacturing and renewable hydrogen as well as decarbonisation of manufacturing including metals production.

The Queensland Government has led the nation releasing a discussion paper and Queensland Hydrogen Industry Strategy ahead of the previous Federal Government. The Deputy Premier has recently travelled to Japan to progress export opportunities for renewable hydrogen. The 2022 budget committed another $15 million to support work on the Central Queensland Hydrogen project in Gladstone. This builds on $80 million of investment from the Queensland Government in projects to establish the renewable hydrogen supply chain.

The Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan (QRIDP) further supports the exploration for the critical minerals reserves that will be needed by the world during the clean energy industrial revolution.

(b) The advice to Trade and Investment Queensland from global markets and Queensland’s trading partners is that demand for metallurgical coal will remain until global steel mills can transition to alternative technologies and that this will take several decades. It is important that steel continues to be provided for the construction of wind turbines that will be needed to create renewable hydrogen. Without steel supply it is not possible to construct the renewables needed to decarbonise metals production.

(c) Given the circumstances described at (b) above (that demand for high-quality inputs such as Queensland’s metallurgical coal is likely to be maintained for decades to come), the Queensland Government’s position is that all proposed coal projects must stack up socially, environmentally and economically. Each project must proceed on its own merits, based on demand and economic viability, and meet the highest environmental and community standards.

(d) The QRIDP has a focus on building a safe and resilient workforce in the resources industry. The plan recognises that the resource industry is undergoing rapid and large-scale shifts in skill requirements due to a range of factors, including changing technologies and data and digital innovation. Understanding and responding positively to these challenges will be key to ensuring that the resources industry employs more Queenslanders, providing high-wage, highly skilled, safe and fulfilling careers. A key initiative identified in the QRIDP is for the Queensland Government to establish a working group to develop a workforce plan for the Queensland resources industry. This workforce plan will identify the future skills needed in the regions for existing and new workers.