




Speech By
Hon. Jeff Seeney

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 9 September 2014

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Abbot Point Beneficial Reuse Strategy

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.40 am): Madam Speaker, our government promised better infrastructure and planning and to grow a four-pillar economy. Nowhere is our commitment more evident than our actions to support the development of the Galilee Basin mining projects and the expansion of the critical port of Abbot Point. From day one in government we have worked diligently to unravel the technical, commercial and legal impediments to rail and port developments in the Galilee inherited from the former Labor government.

The Labor government granted a whole host of rights to a range of proponents which made it incredibly difficult for any single proponent to succeed. It was confusion caused by incompetence. Over the last two years we have sought to untie the knots that were wrapped securely around the Galilee Basin and Abbot Point by the previous incompetent government to ensure that mines have the best chance of being developed and the port can expand in a manner that respects the environment.

After two years of work, this week it has been incredibly gratifying for me to advance our strategy, which will see three million cubic metres of dredge material produced during the expansion of Abbot Point given the chance to be beneficially reused on land that is owned by the Queensland taxpayer. This strategy will create a win-win situation by protecting the unique values of the Great Barrier Reef and allowing for the staged development of this critical port by enhancing valuable port land.

Under the Abbot Point Beneficial Reuse Strategy, the Queensland government will make application to the Commonwealth for dredge material to be reused to enhance land at an existing site within the Abbot Point State Development Area. This plan sees dredge material treated as a resource to enhance port development in the same way that dredge material has supported major expansions at the Port of Brisbane for the last 40 years. Under the arrangements we are seeking to have approved by the Commonwealth, the state government will benefit from being able to use this material as a raw product to value-add state-owned land at the port, and resource proponents will benefit by having a secure, cost-effective means of disposing of dredge material.

Following discussions with industry over the past two years, the state believes that this plan provides a new commercially attractive option for resource proponents to dispose of dredge material when compared to the costs of disposing at sea. With the state government acting as the proponent, there is a reduced requirement for companies to apply for their own Commonwealth approvals and a subsequent reduction in the costs of gaining those approvals and monitoring any disposals at sea. Any commercial arrangements for beneficial reuse between resource companies and the state government will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis, but it is most unlikely that we would ever pay directly for the dredge material.

It is important to emphasise that today's announcement does not affect existing legal approvals for dredging that have already been issued by the federal government. What we are doing is simply offering the opportunity for those operators and operators in the future to consider the beneficial reuse of dredge material on land to enhance the port land that is owned by Queensland taxpayers. We will now ask federal environment minister Greg Hunt to fast-track approval of our strategy under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act so that the opportunity for proponents to take advantage of this beneficial reuse option can be available by March next year, when the legal permits that currently exist will be actioned.

Only this government has the long-term vision and commitment to proper planning that will unlock the resource-rich Galilee Basin and create up to 28,000 jobs for a new generation of Queenslanders. Today's announcement shows that our government is serious about protecting the Great Barrier Reef and growing the Queensland economy. This plan will ensure that we will deliver on both of those promises to the people of Queensland.