




Speech By
Hon. Jeff Seeney

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Royalties for the Regions

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.41 am): Madam Speaker, our government made a promise to the people of Queensland at the last election that we would boost front-line services, and nowhere has our determination been greater than in regional Queensland to do just that. In regional Queensland communities have been neglected for decades and front-line services were run down by the previous Labor government.

Our regional economic development strategy RegionsQ encapsulates our government's determination to grow regional economies and to revitalise front-line services throughout regional Queensland. RegionsQ draws on the *Governing for growth: economic strategy and action plan* and identifies the priorities that will achieve the long-term vision that 80,000 Queenslanders themselves articulated in the Queensland Plan when they said they wanted a decentralised state and they wanted more people to live in regional Queensland. RegionsQ is about restoring respect for the important role that regional Queenslanders play in driving our state's economy and working with communities to find ways to grow investment, business opportunities and jobs in the regions.

Spearheading our efforts to boost infrastructure and services in regional Queensland is the Royalties for the Regions program with RegionsQ which we launched as soon as we were elected and that has so far funded not just roads, water plants and sewerage plants, but some much needed projects to deliver social services in regional communities. We understand the importance of early childhood education for kids everywhere, but for country kids in country towns too, so we have partnered with local councils in central western Queensland to provide the high-quality long day care services that they have never had before. In Barcaldine, with the assistance of the Barcaldine Regional Council, we identified the clear need for this type of community-driven centre to make life easier for working parents and to provide significant social and economic value to the region. The child care centre, funded by the Royalties for the Regions program, will be located on the grounds of the Barcaldine State School and will provide day care for babies to school aged children five days a week, after school and vacation care for children up to 12 years of age and a kindergarten program.

Not far away in Blackall, the Blackall-Tambo Regional Council asked us to help them fulfil a need for a long day care service in their town. Work will soon start on a \$1 million refurbishment program—over half of which is funded by the Royalties for the Regions program—of a disused preschool building at the Blackall State School to construct a state-of-the-art child care facility with plenty of space for the kids of that town. In the Burdekin region in north Queensland the Royalties for the Regions program will fund a much needed PCYC community centre expansion in Ayr that will provide a variety of services to improve the physical and emotional wellbeing of locals, and I was very pleased to inspect that project a couple of weeks ago with the member for Burdekin. In the mining

community of Dysart, \$750,000 worth of Royalties for the Regions funding will build a brand new medical centre to transform a situation in which Dysart's general practitioner was operating from a government owned house.

Of all the projects we have funded through the Royalties for the Regions program, one of my personal favourites was a brand new swimming pool for the kids of Karumba in the gulf. I will always remember looking down at the back of the hall that day in Karumba when we announced that we were going to allocate \$1 million from Royal for the Regions to build a new pool. It came as a complete surprise to the kids, and the mums shed a few tears of joy as well.

The Royalties for the Regions program is bringing these sorts of facilities to regional communities where they have never existed before. We are a government that is genuine about building vibrant, prosperous Queensland regions, and Royalties for the Regions has made a big difference to front-line services in country towns for country people.