

MAJOR PROJECTS IN GLADSTONE REGION UNDERLINE DYNAMIC QLD ECONOMY

JOINT STATEMENT

Queensland is the midst of its greatest ever construction boom, said Premier Peter Beattie.

Mr Beattie said according to the Government's Projects Queensland 2005-06 report, 773 major projects over \$10 million each were being currently undertaken or planned right across the State, covering mining and minerals processing, public transport, roads, rail, energy, ports, water infrastructure, tourism facilities, schools and hospitals.

He said the Government was driving much this development via its \$66 billion South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan as well as its 10 year Blueprint for the Bush which maps out \$36 billion of public and private investment already being undertaken or under active consideration to sustain and grow rural and regional communities.

"Queensland is experiencing the most sustained period of growth and prosperity ever recorded in the State's history - stronger than any other state in Australia. As a result, business confidence in the State is high and we're attracting strong investment across all industrial sectors, from our traditional industries like mining to our emerging industries like aviation and aerospace," Mr Beattie said.

"What's driving our economic success story are: our growing population and the economic opportunities that are coming with that, the boom in the mining sector, especially the coal industry, and the Government's Smart State strategy which is setting up the State beautifully for the next 20 years of economic and social development.

"And all this in turn is driving a huge amount of construction activity throughout Queensland.

"You only had to look at what was happening in Gladstone City and Calliope Shire to see the level of economic activity in Queensland these days," Deputy Premier, Treasurer, and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation, Anna Bligh said.

Some of the major State, Federal and local government and private sector projects currently under construction or on the drawing board in the Gladstone region are the:

- \$2.5 billion Gladstone Pacific Nickel Project (with a total estimated development cost of \$4 billion) is currently in the environmental impact study stage. Gladstone Pacific Nickel is completing a feasibility study for the establishment of a laterite nickel and cobalt mine at Marlborough and refinery on the Gladstone State Development Area;
- Wiggins Island Coal Terminal has an estimated total development cost of \$1.8 billion, \$600 million of which is for stage one. It is expected to create 500 construction jobs and 125 operational jobs. The terminal would service the new and expanded coal mines in the southern Bowen Basin, as well as potential mine developments in the Surat Basin;
- Up to \$1.4 billion has been proposed for the stage two development of Comalco alumina refinery;
- \$420 million Gladstone Port Coal Terminal Expansion is expected to be completed in March 2007. The project will generate 400 construction jobs and more than 60 operational jobs;
- The \$161 million Fisherman's Landing port expansion in Calliope is in stage one of development;
- The Central Queensland Gas Pipeline - from the Bowen Basin to the Gladstone area - is presently under review with an estimated cost of \$200 million. It involves constructing, owning and operating a 240 km high pressure transmission coal seam gas pipeline which could result in 300 construction jobs and 10 operational jobs;
- \$125 million for the proposed Fitzroy River Pipeline from Rockhampton to Gladstone to enhance security of water supply to Gladstone industry;
- \$35 million Emmadale Estate, touted as one of Gladstone's most prestigious residential developments, is under construction and will comprise 750 lots;
- \$21 million Kirkwood Road Project is underway.

Ms Bligh said this drive to greater economic development was not without its challenges, especially on the issues of water supply and the skills shortage that were not only affecting Queensland, but all of Australia.

She said the Government had committed more than \$600 million in new water infrastructure projects alone for

South East Queensland for 2006/07 and significant water infrastructure projects worth \$990 million were under consideration for other parts of the State.

"We're also responding to the skills shortage with a range of initiatives, including the \$1 billion Queensland Skills Plan we launched in March this year and which provides for a 17,000 new trades training places by 2010 and Engineer Your Future whereby we're actively working with industry and our tertiary institutions to encourage and support our young people to follow engineering as a career," she said.