

Premier and Minister for the Arts
The Honourable Anna Bligh

Thursday, July 23, 2009

Betty tells Anna: Phosphate's the NW's future

Premier Anna Bligh has been left in no doubt that phosphate is the North West's future, Member for Mount Isa Betty Kiernan said after they met in Brisbane earlier this week.

Mrs Kiernan, accompanied Mr Joseph Gutnick, of Legend International Holdings, met the Premier in her Brisbane Office, highlighting that more than 1000 jobs were linked to the Georgina Basin project.

"I told Anna this is real and in the now; it's not out there in the never never," said Mrs Kiernan.

The Premier agreed. "There is a lot of hype about uranium mining in Queensland, but it might be decades away - if at all.

"I went to this year's poll with a clear position and that won't be changing. This is now. There are six times as many jobs on offer here with the one project. Let's get on with it," said the Premier.

Legend International plans to begin mining up to one million tonnes a year at its D-Tree phosphate mine, 125km north of Mount Isa.

It plans to ramp up production to 5 million tonnes a year by 2012.

Mrs Kiernan said Legend is a serious player.

"My aim is to get what is best for the North West. This, along with certainty of power and rail, are my priorities. I told the Premier I'm about looking after all of our resources - not just one!" she said.

Legend plans to become one of the world's leading suppliers of phosphate and fertiliser products and has an agreement with an Indian giant to take up to 7tma.

Mrs Kiernan said that already Legend had an excellent relationship with the indigenous people of our area, especially the Injulanjulan who are the Traditional Owners. Myuma Pty Ltd is also working closely with the project to insure full participation and opportunity for training and long term employment.

"They are all about training and skills development and jobs for the future," she said.

"There is no better champion for the North West than Betty," said the Premier.

"This week's meeting proves this. Betty got these industry giants through the my door. There is a huge opportunity right here with this massive deposit," said the Premier.

"Once all the environmental ticks are in place it has to be mined then transported. Apart from the jobs the export and financial returns are obvious," she said.