



26 NOV, 2019

North West to flourish

North West Star, Mount Isa

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INNOVATION FORUM

BY DEREK BARRY

SENATOR for Queensland, Susan McDonald, has used a hometown Innovation forum in her Cloncurry hometown to congratulate North West leaders for embracing the future.

Senator McDonald told Monday's forum North West Queensland was well placed to take advantage of significant federal spending in the region.

"Since the release of the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia, the Australian government has delivered on 42 of the 51 commitments through an agenda worth \$6.2 billion across northern Australia," Senator McDonald said.

"Nearly \$3 billion has been set aside for the Northern Australia, Beef Roads and Roads of Strategic Importance programs."

Senator McDonald said a new report had identified Northern Australia's live cattle and beef exports as having the highest growth potential into ASEAN nations with an annual export demand of \$13 billion by 2025.

"Scott Morrison is the most regions-focused Prime Minister we've had and it's the perfect time for the North West to seek funding for innovative projects to set the region up for decades of growth," she said.

Senator McDonald said the North West Minerals

Province held the promise of many more years of mining jobs which would require people with vision and skills to take advantage.

"The rise in demand for rare earth minerals has the Minerals Province perfectly placed to remain a major player in the world resources scene," she said.

"In fact, my fellow Senator Matt Canavan has only just taken part in the US-Australia Critical Minerals Dialogue that agreed that each country's respective export finance agencies will work together at financing critical minerals and rare earths projects."

Senator McDonald said Cloncurry has just been named as the site for a centre of excellence for drone pilots.

"The Cloncurry Intermodal Rail Project is set to revolutionise the movement of freight from the North West to coastal ports and the world," she said.

"Cloncurry has long been identified as a region of enormous opportunity, whether it be for fattening bullocks, setting up an airline and airborne medical service, or pulling minerals out of the ground.

"I believe that some of the disadvantages associated with our remoteness can now be overcome to allow the North West to realise its full potential."



It's the perfect time for the North West to seek funding for innovative projects to set the region up for decades of growth

Susan McDonald



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HOME TOWN: Senator Susan McDonald speaks at the Cloncurry Innovation Forum. **Photo: supplied**