

A faster lane for exports

The 600-strong population of the railway town of Copabella was almost doubled for the official opening of Stage Two of the \$1 billion Main Line Electrification Project in Central Queensland.

With Transport Minister Don Lane at the controls, Australia's longest coal train broke the ribbon to officially open the 773 kilometres of electrified line connecting the coal mines in the Goonyella Mine system, including Blair Athol and Oakey Creek, with the coal export facilities at Hay Point and Dalrymple Bay.

The line-opening electric train, carrying coal from Peak Downs Mine in 150 wagons, was powered by five of the Railways Department's new 110-tonne electric diesels. The total weight of the train was 10,700 tonnes and it was almost two kilometres long.

Electrically-hauled coal trains began operating on the Blackwater Mine system about two weeks earlier in Stage One of the rail electrification project.

The first section of Stage One, linking Gladstone to Rockhampton, came into operation last September.

Stage Three will see the extension of electrified line from Tolmies, near Blackwater, to Emerald.

Mr Lane said the commissioning was a giant leap into the 21st century and guaranteed that the rail haulage from the rich Central Queensland coal fields would remain one of the most efficient operations in the world.

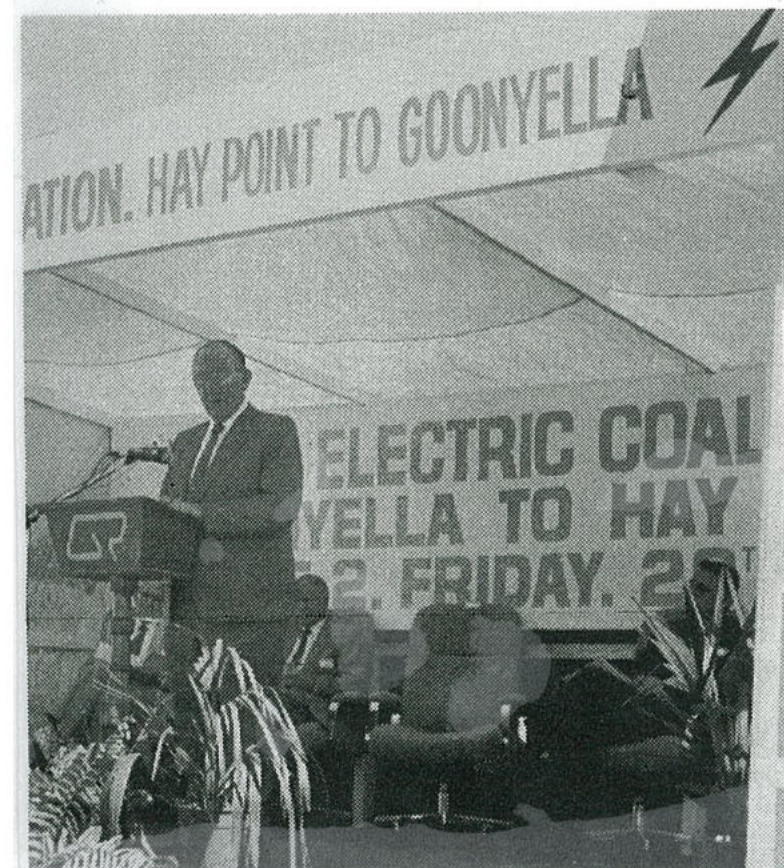
The Minister said when the Main Line Electrification was fully operational benefits would include fuel savings conservatively estimated at \$50 million a year.

Mr Lane said that Stage Four of the electrification would bring a transport benefit to the people of Central Queensland.

Stage Four will electrify the main line between Caboolture and Gladstone. This will mean high speed inter-city trains that will slash almost six hours off the Brisbane to Rockhampton run and freight trains of 1200 tonnes cutting four hours off the same route.



• On the right track



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Goonyella Pit project on target

Employment recruitment for Goonyella Mine's Cleanskin Project is well up to target.

Goonyella Personnel Officer Rod Pennington said that during January and February 64 of the targeted 69 were at work at the mine. "The remaining 19 to bring the extra number employed for the Cleanskin Project to 88 will be employed after the Preparation Plant extensions are completed later this year," he said.

Rod said that during this period of a coal industry downturn, the recruitment had

rest are drawn from Central Queensland.

"They cover all classifications, including staff, electricians, fitters, plant operators, truck drivers, servicemen and miners. And all are of a very high calibre," said Rod.

He said recruitment, which started in November, had gone smoothly and that the mine had had good assistance from the unions. The first of the new employees started work after the Christmas shut down.

"The associated house-building in Moranbah dovetailed in perfectly," said Rod, "with 50

