

Landmark CopperString deal positions NQ industry to take on the world

The transformative CopperString 2.0 energy transmission network project that is forecast to support more than 3,500 Queensland jobs, has taken a major step forward after the Queensland Government, CuString Pty Ltd and Korea Zinc Company Ltd signed an innovative \$17 million financing agreement that will ensure the CopperString 2.0 project continues towards a Final Investment Decision (FID) in mid-2021.

Mr Joseph O'Brien, Managing Director, CuString, the Townsville company behind the project, congratulated the Queensland Government for finalising the tripartite agreement between the government, CuString and Korea Zinc.

This financing arrangement was facilitated by the Queensland Government through the CopperString Implementation Agreement signed in October 2020 in Mount Isa.

The agreement has been pivotal in securing Korea Zinc's involvement in the CopperString project and ensuring that Townsville and North West Queensland are well positioned to grow as a globally significant supply chain for critical minerals, low-emissions industrial products and related manufacturing, and in the future green hydrogen, Mr O'Brien said."

Mr O'Brien said the burgeoning global demand for minerals and clean energy through a low-emissions, secure supply chain presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to attract more investment and create more jobs through the development of a Clean Industrial Ecosystem spanning North and North West Queensland.

Korea Zinc, through its subsidiary Sun Metals and their Townsville zinc refinery, is a world-leading minerals-processing and clean energy business and their investment in the CopperString 2.0 transmission project illustrates strong strategic alignment between industrial manufacturing and major common use energy infrastructure for North and NW Queensland.

"This financing agreement enlivens the significant opportunity we have to make the Queensland economy more resilient with CopperString's potential to deliver a 40% reduction in wholesale electricity prices for the North West Minerals Province to drive our global competitiveness in minerals mining and manufacturing and unlock new industries such as hydrogen, Mr O'Brien said."

The world wants what we've got in the North West Minerals Province – globally significant resources including copper, lead, zinc, nickel, cobalt, gold, graphite, vanadium, silver, phosphate and strong rare-earth mineral potential – a truly impressive list of commodities, and Queenslanders deserve to reap the economic benefits of this export trade.

Global demand is very strong for our commodities as they are critical inputs for smart devices, laptops and tablets and new clean energy technologies such as batteries, wind turbines and electric vehicles.

Korea Zinc's strengths as a diversified industrial business with active development initiatives across critical minerals and hydrogen, complements CopperString's vision of developing a clean industrial ecosystem that will deliver cheaper wholesale electricity and increase our competitiveness in new minerals mining and manufacturing and promote energy investment across Northern Queensland in coming decades.

Yun Choi, Vice Chairman of Korea Zinc, said he sees great potential for CopperString to strengthen the industrial and clean energy ecosystem across the Townsville to Mount Isa corridor.

"This regional economic development opportunity is important to Sun Metals and Korea Zinc, and is a strong element of our interest in supporting the CopperString project. We look forward to continuing our

collaboration with the Palaszczuk Government and CopperString in relation to minerals processing, renewable energy and hydrogen development, Mr Choi said.”

“With known resources in the NWMP estimated at \$680 billion, we can see the real potential of having Korea Zinc, who are a global leader in minerals processing, employer and value-adding exporter in North Queensland, investing in the CopperString project, Mr O’Brien said.

“Having a strategic investor such as Sun Metals Korea Zinc – who a global leader in de-carbonised minerals processing and industrial technology - in the CopperString investor group joining DIF Capital Partners and Powerlink (who have an option to invest), is a powerful validation of the Queensland Government’s commitment to CopperString and the potential economic benefits it can deliver, Mr O’Brien said”.

Mr O’Brien said that the CopperString Implementation Agreement, coupled with the Queensland Government’s Renewable Energy Zones, Hydrogen Strategy, and industrial manufacturing and investment attraction policies lay a very strong platform to underpin jobs, investment and growth opportunities across North and North West Queensland, Mr O’Brien said.

“According to the economic impact analysis, the CopperString 2.0 Project will sustain an additional 3,561 FTE jobs in Northern Queensland on average for the period to 2050, increase the real economic output of Queensland, and add gross minerals production of \$154 billion; and if we can continue our collaboration with the Queensland Government and Australian Government these important economic and employment benefits will flow across Queensland, Mr O’Brien said”.

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