



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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URANIUM MINING

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (5.40 pm): It gives me great pleasure to second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. This morning the Premier stated, 'I notice we have had some argy-bargy about uranium.' The Premier did not make clear that the argy-bargy is all occurring on his side of the House. No, Premier—

Government members interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: The members opposite will hear from the member for Charters Towers later. The Premier's position is not clear: his party's position is not clear and his personal position is not clear. This morning the Premier may have entered into *Hansard* the position that the Queensland government's policy is no uranium mining, no processing and no nuclear dump in Queensland. But this position has changed, has been played around with, has been made subject to the federal ALP. Consequently, the Premier's position has been unclear ever since uranium mining was put back on the political agenda.

This ever-changing position has developed as a result of Labor's internal argy-bargy. The only thing this position has not been is in the interests of the state of Queensland. This position has been developed without proper consideration of the potential growth of the Queensland economy. This position has not been developed in the consideration of the future employment opportunities that it would create. Before the Premier justifies his party's position by suggesting that uranium mining may affect our coal industry, how about he waits until his department gets back to him as to whether that would, in fact, occur.

Why does the Labor Party believe that uranium mining and coalmining in this state have to be mutually exclusive industries? Just because one is operating does not mean the death of the other. I refer to the article by the member for Hervey Bay, Andrew McNamara, which appeared in the *Courier-Mail* on 13 April. It states—

QRC—

which is the Queensland Mining Council—

chief executive, Michael Roche said recently that Queensland's coal miners could see no justification for excluding Queensland uranium from the global energy mix.

Instead of trying to instigate fear in and about the coal industry, the government should get its position straight. As I have said, any observer of the Labor Party is completely confused as to whether the party is for or against uranium mining or whether it is for or against new jobs in this state.

The continued changing of position in the last couple of months by the government means that any observer could not possibly accept that the position stated by the Premier this morning will not necessarily change tomorrow, or next week, or when the federal ALP finally makes a decision on where it stands.

Here is what members of the Labor Party have said over the past few months and why the coalition and anyone who observes politics is confused as to the stance of the ALP. I will start with the Premier. Throughout 2005, Premier Beattie stated that it is not in this state's interests to be supporting the development of a nuclear industry and that this position is based on sound economic assessment. As late as 28 March 2006 in the *Age* he stated—

We have a good relationship with the Chinese, they are ... big buyers of our coal and I want to make sure that they continue to be big purchasers of our coal ... but are we going to have any more uranium mines? From the Queensland Government's point of view—no.

The Labor member for Indooroopilly, Ronan Lee, has come out and said that his view is to leave it in the ground—'Don't dig it up, I would like to close the three mines that are already open in other states and I will fight tooth and nail in the caucus to make sure there are no changes to the policy.'

Then the federal ALP and the ALP in other states started changing their minds. The Premier of South Australia, Mike Rann, along with federal Labor politicians from that state have called on their Canberra colleagues to rethink the 20-year-old Labor policy that bans new uranium mines. Then federal Labor leader, Kim Beazley, and his resource spokesman have both said that they agree in principle with the export of uranium.

That is against what Premier Beattie and Ronan Lee are saying. But knowing that, the Queensland Labor Party decided to alter its position. The member for Mount Isa has come out and said, 'I am firmly committed to uranium mining and will do everything I can within the party to bring about change.' A firmly committed McGrady up against Lee, who is going to fight tooth and nail in the caucus: this is Labor argy-bargy at its best. I cannot wait to see who would win that fight, but I have a feeling I know who will. Labor's Andrew McNamara has also insisted that energy hungry countries may consider Queensland's anti-uranium stance as selfish and could cause diplomatic tension.

A government member interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: That is what the member said in the *Courier-Mail* on 13 April. Only last week the *Courier-Mail* reported that Andrew McNamara's comments have further divided the government on this contentious issue.

In light of this argy-bargy and in light of the changing federal Labor position, Premier Beattie decided to start altering his original hardline stance. On 4 April he said—

I don't want to do anything that's going to undermine the coal industry, but the future of uranium's in the hands of the national ALP conference.

On 5 April the Premier told the *Courier-Mail*—

I'll be asking my department to do some work on that prior to the ALP conference and my position on the floor ... will be determined on the outcome of that.

This is why the Premier's position remains unclear. It has changed. How can we expect that it will not change again? Furthermore, and what is inexcusable, is that the Premier will not develop his position in the interests of Queensland but in accordance with what the federal ALP tells him to do. This morning the Premier acknowledged that fact after he made the claim that his position was clear.