



Speech by

## Vaughan Johnson

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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### COAL INDUSTRY

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—NPA) (11.37 am): We heard this morning in the House the Premier make reference to an independent review of the Goonyella coal chain involving two resource council representatives and two government representatives. This is catch-up time for this state government. All the slandering we have seen of coal companies in recent days is an embarrassment not only to this government but also to the people who work in this great industry in Queensland.

In his contribution today the Leader of the Opposition talked about this Treasurer and the Socialist Left in relation to the budget being brought down here this afternoon. What this government does not recognise is the situation surrounding the coal industry in Queensland. We have an industry that brings \$1.5 billion in royalties back to this government. It is a \$17 billion industry and at the end of day all the Premier can do is criticise the people in question.

The Goonyella issue could be addressed in no uncertain terms with the building of the Newlands to Abbot Point link. That is a \$1 billion exercise that will also upgrade Abbot Point. In relation to the issue of Hay Point and Dalrymple Bay, this year there is talk of 45 million tonnes of coal going through there. Some 68 million tonnes of coal is supposed to go through there. They believe 45 million tonnes will go through. By the end of next year it is supposed to be 85 million tonnes. At this point in time, Dalrymple Bay has about 120,000 tonnes of coal in reserve. They need 200,000 tonnes to fill most of the large ships.

The responsibility comes back to Queensland Rail. We can talk all we like about third-party access. I was the minister who at the time under national competition policy split the track from QR to allow third-party access. We did the groundwork during 1997-98. The real fact of the matter is that it is too hard for a socialist government to make the hard decisions. These coal companies are paying up to 20 per cent of the demurrage of those ships that are sitting off Hay Point, Dalrymple Bay and Gladstone while the boffins in George Street procrastinate and wonder how they can fix the problem.

I can tell members how to fix the problem: immediately engage the best heads in town to run the Queensland Rail operation. Warren Phillips has come over from Dalrymple Bay to manage the Jilalan rail yard. He came up from Melbourne five or six years ago. I wonder whether Carolyn Tucker knew all this when she wrote the article in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* on Saturday.

The real issue is: who is running this operation in Queensland? Is it Babcock and Brown, is it Queensland Rail or is it the Queensland government? Are the shipping companies that are waiting to cart that coal going to be treated with absolute disdain and contempt?