



Speech by


## Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Hansard Thursday, 17 May 2012

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### KAGARA ZINC

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (1.15 am): On 9 March this year Environmental Protection Order STAT670 was issued to Kagara Zinc Baal Gammon Mine for the release of acid mine drainage into Jamie Creek which resulted in contamination and fish kills, threatening human health and causing serious environmental harm as it is now flowing into the Walsh River. The Walsh River is the main source of irrigation for the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation area. The potential devastation to the agricultural and tourism based economies that depend on the Walsh River will be irreversible. This will affect Jamie Creek, the Walsh River, Collins Weir and the water supplied to downstream irrigators producing export crops and to graziers producing export beef. With Kagara Zinc entering administration last month, it is vital that this government act with urgency to ensure requirements of Environmental Protection Order STAT670 are undertaken and acid mine drainage from the site is immediately contained to prevent major long-term economic devastation to the industries dependent on the contaminated river systems.

The major concern arising from the mine's financial woes, given the spill and high risk of ongoing contamination of Jamie Creek and the Walsh River, is the apparent failure of Kagara to lodge a \$3,750,572 financial assurance under the conditions of the environmental authority. Baal Gammon Copper Pty Ltd may have some liability for site clean-up but may also just be another shelf company with no real assets. This layered structure of ownership and responsibility may end up being of little comfort to the local residents of the Watsonville and Walsh River communities whose water supply has been poisoned and now must fetch water in from elsewhere. The traditional owners, on top of having a poisoned river, have not received any royalties under their ILUA with the mining company to compensate them for damage to their country and tradespersons and other local businesses are still owed money by Kagara. There is little room here for blame games or stall tactics. The livelihood of hundreds of farmers and residents who depend on this river system for their livelihoods and drinking water depends on this government's capacity to act decisively to contain toxins continuing to leech into Jamie Creek and the Walsh River. I call on the Minister for Environment to actively resolve this serious contamination to these waterways.