



Speech By  
**Deb Frecklington**


**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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Record of Proceedings, 28 August 2014

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**Nanango Electorate, Somerset Region**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (3.17 pm): Today I would like to highlight a serious issue in a region within the electorate of Nanango, the Somerset region. Nestled in this region is the beautiful Brisbane Valley and the iconic townships of Toogoolawah and Esk. The area is just an hour from Brisbane and well known for its scenic drives, rich grazing lands and the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail and its pioneering history. It is an artist's paradise and a wildlife mecca for koalas and bird life. There are the two major water supply dams of Somerset and Wivenhoe located on the doorstep which have been designated key recreational destinations by our government, something locals had asked me for and I have worked towards. Importantly, it is a priority living area and is the main catchment for the population of Brisbane.

Recently there has been much speculation and community concern about a company with a current coal exploration permit over this area. I have been listening to my community on this issue and I understand their concerns. For this reason, I am speaking about this issue in parliament today.

There are three points I would like to make. Firstly, these types of coal exploration permits are granted by the department. There are similar permits which extend over significant regions of Queensland. The residents of the Brisbane Valley are not alone in this situation. Importantly, no exploration activity so far in the Brisbane Valley has resulted in an application for a mining lease to build a coalmine.

Secondly, this is an area which is the main catchment for Brisbane and it is also an area where there is high density of smaller landholders. I want to reassure the constituents of this area that I believe this section of the Nanango electorate is not the place for an open-cut coalmine.

Thirdly, planning: the former Labor government has left the people of my electorate with uncertainty because it failed to plan for situations such as this. As we all know, when you fail to plan, you plan to fail. But our government does plan. The Deputy Premier, the Hon. Geoff Seeney, has made it his priority to establish regional plans across Queensland. Work has begun to review the South East Queensland Regional Plan for the South-East Queensland corner and it will inform all levels of government about the use of land in the Somerset. It is the mechanism to help ensure that no open-cut coalmine is ever developed in the pristine Brisbane Valley. The plan is due to be finalised in 2015. Therefore, I reassure my constituents that I will be working hard on this section of the plan.

Finally, I would like to say to my constituents that I am listening and I am aware this is a very concerning issue. Once again, I assure them that I do not support an open-cut coalmine in the Brisbane Valley and in the water catchment. I will continue to advocate on this issue on behalf of my local constituents.