




Speech By
Hon. Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2016

MOTION: CARMICHAEL MINE

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (6.06 pm): Let me say from the outset that we will not be opposing this motion. When it comes to Adani's development of the Carmichael mine, there has been no bigger friend of this project than the Australian Labor Party. We on this side of the House have been supporters of this project since it was first submitted to the Queensland government in 2010 for approval. During the Bligh government and during the current government, we have done all we can to facilitate and encourage this project within the law of the land and to make sure there is a benefit for the entire community. It is without hesitation that we support this motion.

It was under the Bligh government that the proposed Carmichael coalmine and rail project was designated a significant project. The Bligh government was a great facilitator of the Carmichael mine, not merely guiding the project through the regulatory process but also facilitating the development of the Carmichael mine through the associated infrastructure including the Abbot Point Coal Terminal. We did so much to develop Abbot Point that it was too much for the member for Callide. Let us remember what he said in this place. He did his best Al Gore impersonation. He said we were being environmentally irresponsible. The member for Callide said Labor were being environmentally irresponsible. He said the proposed Abbot Point Coal Terminal was too big. It was too large. How dare we be ambitious!

The member for Callide derided the Bligh government about Abbot Point. What did he do when he got onto the government benches? He did what all conservative governments do—he stopped work, pontificated and stalled the project for 12 months because it was not in their name. It took just two months for the member for Callide to end uncertainty by scrapping the whole proposal for the Abbot Point expansion at that time. The member for Callide then dithered and consulted. He tried to reshape the project and got consultants on board in a vain attempt to rebadge it LNP. The whole time the member for Callide created further uncertainty for coal companies, port corporations and construction companies by flip-flopping on this important project for Queensland. When he could not get the support, he decided to play wedge politics with the dumping of dredge spoil. First, it was in the ocean. Then, when he could not put it there, he wanted to put it in the protected Caley Valley wetlands. There is plenty of time to waste when politics can be played by the member for Callide.

For all the sanctimonious pontificating by those opposite about red tape, the development of the Carmichael mine at Abbot Point lost crucial months and years under their watch. After the people of Queensland handed down their judgement on those opposite around 12 months ago, we on this side of the House got back to work. This government said from day one that we would have a collaborative approach and a consensus style to governing, something that is a foreign concept to those opposite. The expansion of the Abbot Point Coal Terminal is a case highlighting how a consensus style approach can pay dividends.

Within weeks of coming into government—and I remember it like it was yesterday; I remember sitting down with the Deputy Premier and Minister Lynham—we sat face-to-face with representatives from Adani and heard what was required to see this job-generating, economy-building project proceed. Adani expressed their exasperation at the delays of red tape that had accumulated under the LNP. Just weeks later a new agreement was reached to put in place an environmentally sustainable proposal for the expansion of the Abbot Point Coal Terminal. This agreement eliminated the dumping of dredge spoil on wetlands or in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

This agreement between the government and Adani was a long time coming. After various iterations of the dredging plan, we now have an environmentally sustainable and fiscally responsible proposal. There is no denying the economic benefits of \$16 billion of investment this project would bring to North Queensland and to the rest of the state. Expansion of Abbot Point is the linchpin for developing the Galilee Basin coalfields. The Galilee Basin mine, rail and port projects are expected to create jobs and build economic development. The Carmichael mine will generate up to 1,075 jobs during construction and up to 3,800 jobs during operation. The associated rail line will generate up to 1,400 jobs during construction and up to 120 jobs during operation. The potential flow-on effects to regional communities are also significant.

We on this side of the House did this by getting the balance right. We got the balance right between the environmental need to prevent the offshore disposal of dredge spoil and the need to get Adani's project up and running. I hope those opposite are listening. It is possible to facilitate investment in the resources sector and care for the Great Barrier Reef. This is what Labor does; we get the economy working while protecting what Queenslanders hold dear—that is, our environment. We get the economy right because we get the projects right and we facilitate jobs for Queensland.

I support this motion because it is what we on this side of the House have always done, and that is get results for Queenslanders. This will be one of the most significant decisions that would be made by this government. I fully support this motion. I know it will have the support of all members of this House.