




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2016

MOTION: CARMICHAEL MINE

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (6.11 pm): Six years and \$3 billion—that is right; it is almost beyond comprehension that a company would spend that amount of money and time on a mine, rail and port project in this state without turning a sod. That is exactly what has happened with Adani's Carmichael mine. Today we have heard from the Premier, the Deputy Premier and a number of ministers about their infrastructure plan, yet when it comes to delivering one of the biggest job-creating projects in Queensland's history, they are frozen at the wheel. Why is the Premier stalling? Why is she taking so long and hanging the people of Central and Northern Queensland out to dry when we so desperately need the jobs that this project will create? Their own draft State Infrastructure Plan states, 'Unlocking untapped coal reserves in the Galilee Basin will have significant economic benefits for centres like Rockhampton, Mackay, Bowen and Townsville'. That is right; it will have significant economic benefits that could have been flowing into our communities around the state. The uncertainty and the lack of confidence that currently exists in our northern communities is a direct reflection on this government.

The Premier should try telling that to the business owners in Bowen and Collinsville who invested millions of dollars in the belief that this project would go ahead and who have now been declared bankrupt because of the delays in granting the necessary approvals while this government are sitting on their hands. She should try explaining to the families who had to pack up and leave because they could not wait any longer for this project to commence and who were sick of waiting at the end of an unemployment queue why she will not fast-track this approval. I know my colleague the member for Gregory tells a similar story about how towns in his electorate like Alpha, Jericho, Barcaldine and Emerald are hurting because of the downturn in the mining sector and are mourning the lost opportunities in training apprentices such as electricians, diesel fitters and boilermakers that are so important to grow this state.

Make no mistake: this is a history-making project that comes along only once in a lifetime. This is a mine expected to yield 50 million tonnes of coal a year with the company planning to construct a 189-kilometre rail line to transport the coal to Abbot Point. The project is set to create thousands of jobs and generate \$22 billion in taxes and royalties. I wonder what we could do with \$22 billion around the state of Queensland in the present economic climate. Furthermore, the federal environment minister, Greg Hunt, has reapproved Adani's coalmine and rail project under 36 of the strictest conditions in Australia's history.

What is the reason for the delay? Is it because we have a government being held hostage by the ideologically driven green groups, or is it because this government is caught up in its own bureaucratic web that has hamstrung it to the extent that it cannot deliver real projects and jobs for Queenslanders? Frankly, I am amazed that Adani has stuck around and continued to fight this battle. After all, they have been continuously embroiled in expensive and ongoing legal challenges by radical green groups, submitted countless environmental impact statements and basically had to defend their own business's confidence in investing in Queensland. This government's procrastination is threatening the economic viability of our region at a time when jobs and economic development are paramount.

The Premier has no idea what it would mean to the people of Central and Northern Queensland to see this project approved. They need hope and commitment, not empty promises and buck passing. I have communities in my electorate like Bowen and Collinsville who are experiencing the biggest downturn in their history, who are fighting for survival and who are on the brink of becoming mere shells of their former vibrant communities. I say to the Premier that we have sat in this place month in, month out and listened to her rhetoric around jobs, yet when the opportunity presents itself to sign off on a project that will deliver thousands of jobs to Queenslanders she is found wanting. The time for talk is over. The thousands of people in regional Queensland want jobs, economic growth and futures for their towns, businesses and their children.

We cannot afford to let this opportunity slide. I am calling on this government to give this project the green light and sign off on all the approvals necessary for Adani's \$16 billion Carmichael mine to proceed. I cannot state it more simply for the Premier than to say: for the sake of Queensland, make it happen.