




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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MINERAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (4.00 pm): I rise to speak on the Mineral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. There is no doubt that our state—in fact, our economy—needs to have the right balance between mining, farming and the community. Right now agriculture is still the unsung hero of our economy as we experience a massive downturn in the resources sector. The seat of Gregory generates a lot of wealth for this state from both agriculture and mining, so it is in the best interests of the state and our economy that we need to get this right.

Both high-value agriculture and mining have been a part of the region I represent for a long time. Of course, agriculture has been around for well over 150 years in the seat of Gregory. Mining, which was started by Utah back in the 1960s and 1970s, has played a significant role in growing our region's economy, especially in the seat of Gregory. Without it we would not have towns like Blackwater, Tieri, Middlemount, Moranbah and Dysart or the existing agriculture towns like Emerald, Capella and Clermont. We would not have the population increase, the upgrades to schools, the sporting facilities and hospitals, schools and police stations—and the list goes on. We also would not have the opportunities of the jobs it creates—apprentices in diesel fitting, boiler making and electricians. They are all jobs that bring families to our regions and those families send their children to our local schools and participate in the local community. Mining will still play a key role in the economic viability of our region.

As I come from agriculture, I also know too well the importance of protecting valuable agricultural land. I represent some of the finest farming and grazing land in the country. There is the Emerald irrigation area—the golden triangle—the vast grazing country in that area which has some of the best beef-fattening country in the state. Like I said, right now agriculture is an unsung hero in the state's economy despite the drought in the west, so it is important that we get this right. While I do not oppose the notification of objection rights being extended, I do have concerns that people outside Queensland should be able to bring court action that delays job growth in our regions. I am talking about people who are just anti coal and are doing so because of their green, left-wing policies. Ironically, they are the same people who are against agriculture in terms of the live cattle trade and increasing production areas. They are the same people who I think sometimes take the good natured and very real concerns of landholders over mining but they use it for their own political extreme green views because they are anti coal no matter where it is.

We only have to go to the document that the member for Burleigh mentioned earlier, *Stopping the Australian coal export boom*. They have a six-element strategy: to disrupt and delay key infrastructure—and this is the real concern—to increase investor risk, create uncertainty and heighten the perception of risk over coal investments. We are talking about the economy of this state and jobs growth in this state. A part of their plan is to mount a legal challenge to the approval of several key ports, mines and rail lines and run legal challenges that delay, limit or stop all major infrastructure projects—mines, rail and ports—that have been identified as high priority in the strategy. I think that is

very dangerous. They have no concern or regard for jobs growth and the people in my electorate of Gregory, where the mining industry and the agricultural industry are key to our survival. The mining industry provides those jobs—those new jobs and new careers—for the apprentice electricians, the apprentice boilermakers and the apprentice diesel fitters which are so important.

One of the most talked about issues in the electorate I represent is when is the Carmichael mine and mining opportunities going to come to the Galilee Basin? Because of the massive downturn in mining in the Bowen Basin, we have seen many small businesses looking for the next opportunity. They have had to lay off staff, downsize operations and cut spending. Some have had to look for opportunities elsewhere and leave the area. This hurts our local economy and it hurts our local community.

While I believe strongly that landholders directly impacted by mines have every right to be a part of the objection rights—and I sincerely hope mining companies take notice of them, sit down with them and address their specific issues—I still have very real concerns about groups outside of this state, outside of Queensland, who are green activists with an agenda of anti coal and, in turn, anti opportunity for regional Queensland.