




Speech By  
**Hon. Dr Steven Miles**  
**MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA**

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Record of Proceedings, 9 August 2017

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Ipswich, Waste

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (2.21 pm): Yesterday in response to a question from the member for Ipswich West I advised the House that I had asked the environment department to investigate claims made by the ABC's *Four Corners* program about practices at a landfill site at New Chum. They were to report back to me by the end of yesterday. I table that report.

*Tabled paper:* Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Company Profile Cleanaway Waste Management Limited and associated documents [[1276](#)].

I would also like to set the record straight about this site. EHP advises that the facility at New Chum is a well-engineered facility. Sometimes using the void of a disused mine is a good option for landfill provided it is sealed, which the New Chum facility is.

The fire on 2 July did not occur as a result of spontaneous coal combustion, and the Queensland fire service attended the site when they were alerted, quickly putting the fire out and leaving the site before midday. EHP is investigating whether there was any noncompliant waste management at the site, but it is worth noting that Cleanaway is required to submit both quarterly exception reporting and an annual monitoring report to EHP detailing the outcomes of their monitoring. This includes all data on groundwater, surface water, landfill gas flare emissions and waste composition. No noncompliances warranting enforcement action have been identified as a result of this data. EHP officers inspected the Cleanaway facility on 3 July 2017 and a further proactive inspection is scheduled for September 2017.

We are also deploying Operation Tora, the waste compliance task force that the Palaszczuk government set up in 2015, to inspect all Ipswich landfill sites. Operation Tora has been working across the state to stamp out rogue operators and has so far carried out 207 investigations leading to 69 enforcement actions. As the Premier said, I have also directed EHP to work with TMR on heavy vehicle inspections at the border and in the Ipswich area. This is one of many actions the government has taken on waste. We have cracked down on illegal storage, transport and disposal of waste. We have introduced a bill to ban single-use plastic bags and introduced a container refund scheme that will drive more recycling and keep rubbish out of our environment. We have thrown our support behind biofuels projects like the Northern Oil Advanced Biofuels Pilot Plant in Yarwun, which can convert just about any kind of waste into various fuels. We are reregulating certain waste operations after the Newman-Nicholls government scrapped the need for these licences, inviting rogue operators into the industry and leading to waste stockpiling such as dangerous tyre stockpiles. In Ipswich we are working on reducing odours caused by waste management facilities by limiting the kinds of waste they can accept.

Like I said yesterday, the waste industry in Queensland is a big industry and in most cases does the right thing and employs many Queenslanders. The good operators want to see bad elements in their industry stamped out as much as we do and that is why they have been working with us. The industry round table the Premier announced today will be another opportunity for them to engage with us.

Just a fortnight ago I was very pleased to represent the Premier at the waste recycling industry dinner. It was a shame nobody from the state LNP cared enough about this important industry to be there. It was the 10th anniversary of their industry body WRIQ and they celebrated with 29 nominees from the industry who are doing excellent work. Over 100 people there that night had been employed in the industry for more than 25 years. It was my great pleasure that night to present the outstanding industry individual award to Rob Skyring from JJ Richards who has over 41 years in the industry. In those 41 years Rob has never missed a collection. He has maintained an impeccable driving record. He has not taken a sick day in the last 11 years and has never received a customer complaint. Rob is respected and admired by management, staff and customers. He is one of the thousands of Queenslanders who work for the waste industry who does a very important job for the rest of us. If the Newman-Nicholls government had more respect for this industry they would not have rolled out the red carpet for the crooks and cowboys exposed by *Four Corners*.