



Speech By  
**Ann Leahy**


**MEMBER FOR WARREGO**

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## VACANCY IN SENATE OF COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

### Election of Senator

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (4.41 pm): I rise to speak to the motion to appoint Larissa Waters to fill the casual Senate vacancy that has been created through the resignation of another senator. It is an immense privilege to be elected and to fulfil the role of a senator for Queensland and to represent the state's interests in the Senate. I believe that it is important to outline the course of events that have led to today's motion in this state parliament.

On 18 July 2017, after learning that she was entitled to Canadian citizenship and therefore ineligible to be elected under section 44 of the Australian Constitution, Larissa Waters resigned from the Senate. Her resignation came four days after her fellow Greens co-deputy leader resigned from the Senate over dual citizenship. Larissa Waters's seat was then filled after a recount, which saw a former Australian Democrats leader, who held the second position on the Greens 2017 Senate ticket in Queensland, return to the Senate. In August 2017 Larissa Waters announced that she had renounced her Canadian citizenship and declared her intention to stand for Greens preselection and return to the parliament at the next federal election.

On 27 October 2017 the High Court handed down its decision and ruled that Larissa Waters was invalidly elected. On 16 June 2018 another senator announced that he would resign from the Senate at the end of August and that Larissa Waters was expected to fill that casual vacancy ahead of the election. That is why we are here today in this state parliament debating this motion.

The framers of the Australian Constitution intended the primary role of the Senate to be to protect the interests of the less populous states in the federal parliament by giving equal representation to all states. The Senate is often referred to as the states' house, and I hope that all senators for Queensland are thinking of the communities from Cape York, to Birdsville, to Coolangatta when they are undertaking their duties.

Unfortunately, when I look at the Greens' policies, I see many areas where the role of representing the state's best interests are in direct conflict with those policies of the Greens. That brings me to those conflicts that this senator will face. I urge her to put the interests of this state and the great people of this state ahead of those Greens' policies in a number of areas.

I will start with coal. The policy of the Greens is to really demonise coal. The Greens want to phase out thermal coalmines and coal export and oppose the development of any new coalmines or the expansion of existing coalmines. There is no thought given to what would happen to the communities that are supported by coalmines. The Greens' policies give no consideration whatsoever to the associated industries that underpin so many jobs in regional Queensland and, as we heard earlier from the member for Gregory, such a large portion of this state's economy.

The Greens' policies give no consideration to what closing down coalmines in Queensland would do to electricity costs for every household in Queensland. This is certainly a policy that is not in the best interests of the resources industry jobs that this state, the communities of this state—or anyone in Queensland for that matter who simply wants to keep the lights on. As a regional member of parliament who has communities that are involved with coal, I ask that this senator put the interests of this state ahead of the Greens' outrageous policy to shut down the coal industry in this state.

If the Greens' policy on coal makes people choke on their cornflakes, wait until they hear the Greens' policy on coal seam gas. The Greens not only want to shut down the coal industry but also want to stop the coal seam gas industry in its tracks. The Greens oppose CSG exploration, production and associated pipeline and export infrastructure developments. That means that the Greens oppose billions of dollars worth of investment in Queensland. It also means that the Greens oppose the industry jobs in my electorate; they oppose the millions of dollars worth of compensation payments being provided to landholders; they oppose the upgrades to the roads; they oppose the upgrades to community facilities and sporting clubs; and they oppose the families who have moved to make their homes in regional Queensland in communities such as Dalby, Chinchilla, Miles, Tara and Roma. Without this investment, how can the state fund the hospitals, the schools, the roads, the dams, the services, the doctors and the nurses that our state of Queensland needs now and into the future?

More than a third of the current business investment in Australia is from the natural gas sector. The oil and gas industry indirectly represents about two per cent of the current GDP. The sector's economic contribution to the national economy is estimated to be more than double—to \$65 billion—in 2020. In 2011-12, the Australian oil and gas industry paid \$8.8 billion in taxes. It is forecast to pay almost \$13 billion in taxes in 2020. At a time when government revenues are under pressure, the contribution of the oil and gas industry is very important to the nation's economic wellbeing and also that of this state. Again, as a regional member who represents a number of communities in the Surat Basin, I ask that the interests of this region and the state be put ahead of those outrageous policies on coal seam gas.

I turn to the production and the breeding of livestock, which is an industry that is close to my heart and that of my electorate. The Greens' policy is to shut down the live export trade of sheep and cattle. Thanks to the federal Labor government, we have already had one overnight shutdown of the live cattle export trade. The impacts of that shutdown were felt far away from the gulf—all the way to the Roma saleyards. During that shutdown, 30 per cent of the cattle coming through the Roma saleyards were northern cattle. That depressed the price. At the time, the south-west region was experiencing drought conditions—which seems to be not unusual—and farmers were forced to sell cattle at prices that did not cover the cost of the freight of the stock to the saleyards.

Closing down the live cattle and sheep trade is not the answer. Putting in place the correct checks and balances on those involved in livestock transport and ensuring transparency of the journey of these animals is the solution. That will give confidence to farmers and the community. As a regional member of parliament, who has the privilege of representing many good sheep and cattle farmers, I ask that their interests and their livelihoods be given due consideration rather than being ostracised by this appalling Greens' policy.

Another very concerning Greens' policy relates to wild rivers. The Greens' policy advocates not only the reintroduction of the wild rivers act 2005, which includes the Cooper Creek catchment in my electorate, but also to include the Paroo and Bulloo rivers catchments. The communities of Cooper Creek, the landholders in the Paroo, Bulloo and Quilpie shires and the local governments tell me that they are strongly opposed to the reintroduction of any wild rivers or pristine rivers legislation.

They know their communities will lose jobs and they will lose population. They have been fighting a drought that is so severe that Mayor Tractor Ferguson has to handfeed his bees. Locking up these catchments with wild rivers restrictions will do nothing to preserve the region; it will hurt the farmers already in drought and it will hurt these communities.

For the last 60 years petroleum products have been produced in the Cooper Basin. Landholders have been managing that land for 130 years. The reason why the Cooper Basin is seen by many outsiders, including the Greens, as pristine is testament to the good management practices of the resources industry and local landholders. Ethane produced in the Cooper Basin is used to produce Australian stretch wrapping, food packaging, water tanks, wheelie bins and the lining on our milk and juice cartons. The Greens' policies will take the glad wrap out of your kitchen and the wheelie bin out of your yard.

I refer to the member for Maiwar who made this statement in the House, and it is also on the Greens' website: 'I want to see our parliament put Queenslanders before the profits of corporations and that's why I support the Greens' stand on banning political donations from property developers, mining, gambling, tobacco and alcohol corporations.' One only has to do a Google search to find that the Greens have received \$1.6 million from the founder of Wotif travel online, Graeme Wood. I say to the Greens that if they want to ban political donations it is a good start to this policy to give back the donations the party has already received.

No doubt the senator-elect will make many personal sacrifices. I know her family will also make sacrifices to support her in her role as a Queensland Greens senator. I wish her all the best in returning to that role as a senator.