




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Central Queensland Coal Network, Aurizon

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.48 pm): I rise today on an issue that has the potential to undermine our resource sector and put a black hole in Queensland's royalty revenue. The decision by Aurizon to change its maintenance program—which by its own admission will deny the capacity to move 20 million tonnes of coal to be exported every year from the Central Queensland coal network for the next four years—is already hurting Queensland's resource sector. This 20-million tonne reduction in coal exports will cost Queensland more than \$4 billion, with a \$500 million black hole in royalties paid to the state government.

The Queensland Competition Authority, tasked with overseeing and regulating the Central Queensland coal network and therefore the standards of operation for Aurizon, has been missing in action on this issue. With the final QCA determination not due until the end of the year, Aurizon is now acting in contravention of the QCA's ruling. What is the Treasurer, who has direct responsibility for the QCA and a responsibility for tracking state revenue, doing to resolve this issue?

Since January 2018 Aurizon has increased unplanned rail closures, made maintenance possessions absolute rather than working around train paths, been unwilling to provide reliable information on scheduling and network availability and continually changed the times of planned possessions. For what would be an extra \$25 million in maintenance, Aurizon has been prepared to cost their customers 160 times that amount in export revenue and cost the state of Queensland 20 times that revenue in lost royalties.

Whilst all of this may sound like technicalities around train and line maintenance, it does have real-world implications, in particular for the resource companies, their workers, the rural and regional communities they support and the state government's bottom line. A \$500 million cut to royalties is a \$100 cut for every man, woman and child living in Queensland in the next state budget. Aurizon's maintenance practices have forced some coal producers to start considering the viability of Queensland jobs, many of which are in my electorate of Burdekin.

I am calling on the Treasurer to look into this mess and deliver some certainty to Queensland's vitally important \$5.1 billion resource sector. What measures is the Treasurer looking at implementing in her preparations for the budget to factor in this \$500 million hit to state revenue? As Minister for Trade, can the Premier explain what impact this projected decrease in coal exports and cost efficiencies is having on our trading partners?

It is time for this government to show some leadership and step in to resolve this issue. The status quo cannot be allowed to continue as it is directly hurting Queensland jobs, revenue and our state's international reputation as a reliable and affordable exporter of resources.