




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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VACANCY IN SENATE OF COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Election of Senator

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (4.30 pm): I rise to speak on this motion. Firstly, I wish the senator all the best as she returns to the Senate but I also call on the senator: you are a senator for all of Queensland, not just inner-city Brisbane. I represent a large section of the state, the seat of Gregory, which contributes a lot to the state economy. That includes agriculture and mining—the two industries under constant attack from the Greens. Yes, these are the two industries—whether it is coal royalties from the mining industry—filling up state government coffers to pay for new schools, health and hospital facilities or our police, fire and emergency services to protect us in times of need. Agriculture is our biggest manufacturing industry because of the abattoirs and our live cattle trade, which I note that Labor now wants to end as well, as we heard from its conference. The Greens party has been on a rampage to close all of those industries down.

One in eight jobs in the greater Brisbane catchment is associated with the mining industry, yet the Greens party wants to shut the mining industry down. That would mean that the Greens want one person out of every eight who works in Brisbane on the unemployment line. It wants you out the front of Centrelink on the unemployment line. It wants those people to arrive home to their families after working in an industry that has provided them with an income to pay the bills, given them a skill set, a career and the ability to pay the mortgage and the school fees and say, 'I've lost my job because the Greens want to shut it down.' We need to make sure that we support our industries in Queensland.

The mining industry and the agricultural industry are a big part of the electorate of Gregory and we get sick of hearing the Greens party continuing to attack everything that we do. I can tell members now that the agricultural industry is a sophisticated, tech savvy industry that cares for the environment whilst also looking for productivity increases in yields to ensure that we have a growing economy. That is the agricultural industry that I know and the agricultural industry in the future.

We need to ensure our senators in Queensland develop a depth of knowledge on issues and challenges facing all Queenslanders. Where could the Greens senator place her office? At the moment it is in Paddington but, given her public sprouting of devotion to the Great Barrier Reef, she could have chosen anywhere like Cairns or Gladstone in regional Queensland or Townsville or Mackay where she could develop a good understanding of the reef, the challenges of shipping transportation, the mining industry or regional ecotourism—all interests of the Greens. Any of these centres would give her a grassroots feel of regional tertiary education as well, which is so important, health and even our Defence Force.

The Greens are loud in support of itinerant protesters who travel and bully the government and local communities when it comes to mining—constantly coming up and bullying us when it comes to mining. How many were even Queenslanders? We do not know. We do know that they annoyed many Queenslanders in our regional towns, but our regional towns want to get on with the job and provide the economy for the state. Someone said to me that ideology is not always wisdom and that ideology

can be deaf, blind and arrogant. I know the senator has had time to leave the Canberra bubble and I hope the time has been well spent listening to people in regional Queensland, understanding why we need to have a strong agricultural industry that generates billions of dollars in trade revenue and employs hundreds of thousands of smart, innovative technology savvy people who not only protect the environment but also generate the jobs and income for our regional towns.

In the most blatant bit of seat warming we have seen in a very long time, Andrew Bartlett, the former Democrat and now Greens politician, took her position. We are here today because Andrew Bartlett wants to contest the lower house seat of Brisbane. I note that the Gladstone *Observer* on 3 August—and the member for Gladstone would be interested in this—reported that Andrew Bartlett recently visited the city and observed that people have the assumption that country areas must all be full of rednecks but that he had found diverse local economies and welcoming attitudes to immigrants. Thank you, Andrew. It must have been a big surprise to you, but thank you for visiting regional Queensland. Thank you for coming out, and guess what? To his shock, he did not even have to take a passport! He was able to come to regional Queensland.

I am hoping that the new senator will be able to take herself away from Brisbane and educate herself on the real concerns of her constituents, half of whom live outside of Brisbane. Please come out to Western Queensland to have a look, talk to the people out there, talk to the small business people, talk to the people on the land and talk to the people who work in the mining industry and see the impacts that it has on the livelihoods of regional communities. We need to have a vibrant regional community if Queensland's economy is going to continue to grow. If we do not have the regions, we have nothing.