



Speech By  
**Patrick Weir**


**MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE**

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## VACANCY IN SENATE OF COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

### Election of Senator

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (4.51 pm): I will use this opportunity to make a brief contribution about some of the issues in Condamine that are in conflict with some of the basic beliefs of the Greens. The electorate of Condamine lies within the heart of the Darling Downs. It is a privilege to represent all the constituents of Condamine. It has been a personal goal of mine to endeavour to assist anyone who has needed support or help during my time as the local member no matter what that issue is. The electorate of Condamine is home to a large diversity and number of industries, including manufacturing, engineering, construction, agriculture, mining, retailing and processing. Many of these industries are at odds with some of the beliefs of the Greens.

This diversity has allowed me to gain an understanding of the importance that each and every industry has to the local economy, plus the economies of Queensland and Australia, and any environmental impacts that they may have. Each of these industries interacts with one another in one way or another to create employment and business opportunities. Because of this diversity of industry there is always a diversity of viewpoints, which I acknowledge readily. I have met with many people who have opposing views of the same issue. My issue often is the way those views are portrayed.

There are two abattoirs in Condamine that process over 3,000 cattle daily and employ over 1,650 people in the local area contributing millions of dollars to the economy. Both of these processing plants adhere to strict environmental guidelines in their operations and have dedicated team members committed to employee safety, animal welfare and food safety. An animal activist protest took place at the Beef City abattoir in May this year where the group claimed that 'slaughterhouses led to increased instances of violent crimes like rape, murder and domestic violence'—an unfounded and ridiculous statement. Oakey Beef self-funded a methane gas project which extracts green energy biogas from the plant's wastewater streams to replace a percentage of the natural gas needed to power the abattoir. This technology cuts greenhouse gas emissions, improves water quality and reduces the odour emissions associated with the abattoir.

The Greens would have us believe that all animal-processing plants should be shut down. Both of these abattoirs are environmentally sustainable and pride themselves on their animal welfare policies. The Condamine electorate not only has animal-processing plants but also has the most number of intensely farmed animals in Queensland. All of these businesses follow strict animal welfare regulations regardless of whether they are feeding pigs, cattle, sheep or poultry. These regulations are stringent and those who disregard them are subject to large penalties, and so they should be. They employ a significant number of people, both directly and indirectly, and inject millions of dollars into the local, state and national economies. The Greens would like to shut these businesses down.

The community of Oakey has been battling an issue that impacts directly upon its residents and those who are employed in the area. That issue is stage 3 of the New Hope coalmine at Acland. This issue has seen a platform driven largely by the conservation movement and heavily supported by the

Greens. These greenies from all over Australia, many of whom would not know where Oakey actually is let alone having visited the town, have condemned the expansion without giving a thought to the majority of the local community, who support stage 3 going ahead. This expansion would ensure the continued employment of 300 locals, 160 contractors and 2,300 indirect jobs.

The Greens have a meeting planned to be held in Toowoomba for 12 October with the title 'Revive: a coal free future for Oakey and the Downs'. I am pretty sure the New Hope Acland coalmine is not located in Toowoomba. They advertised this meeting in the Toowoomba *Chronicle* on 2 September and it will be attended by Larissa Waters and the member for Maiwar. They are meeting at the Downs Club, no less. I table this document.

*Tabled paper:* Media article, dated 2 September 2018, titled 'Greens set to challenge New Acland Coal Mine at meeting' [\[1317\]](#).

I wonder why the Greens would not at least have the courtesy of hosting this meeting at Oakey. Apparently the only reason it will be in Toowoomba is because the Greens were asked to host it in Toowoomba by their friends the Oakey Coal Action Alliance. Do both groups think Oakey businesses would not be capable of hosting such an event, especially an event that will require some form of catering, the hire of a venue, staff to set up, clean up et cetera? I think Oakey businesses would appreciate any business such an event may bring to the community.

The Greens have a plan for a 'coal free future for Oakey and the entire Southern Downs'. They also believe that they 'can revive Oakey without coal and instead work to create a clean green economy that works for rural Queensland'. I struggle with these statements. The Greens want to firstly not allow intensive livestock production; secondly, not allow abattoirs to process meat; and, thirdly, not allow the expansion of the New Hope coalmine. All that is left is the production of grain, cotton and pulses, which is also in the firing line of the Greens with the pesticides and herbicides used, irrigation water that should be directed to the environment and the genetic modification of plants such as cotton.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Condamine, can I ask that you come back to the motion. You are speaking about a political party. This is about the appointment of a senator.

**Mr WEIR:** There is not much left for the creation of a clean green economy that works for Queensland. I admire the courage of Larissa Waters in going back to the Senate. Unfortunately in this place we have a failed senator. That senator is a dud. We do not need any more dud senators in this place. Canberra's loss was not the state parliament's gain. I wish Larissa Waters all the best. I ask that she keeps these issues in mind when she re-enters the Senate.