



Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

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## ADJOURNMENT

### Mining Industry, Automation

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (7.04 pm): Two weeks ago BHP announced that they were automating 300 jobs at their Goonyella Riverside Mine. That was accompanied by an almost laughable promise that there would be no redundancies. We all know why that is. The federal LNP government has allowed them to get away with the casualisation of most of their workforce, which means that they can axe those 300 staff at a moment's notice and without the bother of having to pay out their entitlements. That is a situation that should have the federal LNP hanging their heads in shame. However, the greater worry here is what comes next. I am told that what BHP is attempting here is a world first: automating trucks at an existing strip mine. If they succeed, we can bet that automation will spread like cancer throughout Central Queensland's mining industry, killing jobs and livelihoods as it goes.

We also know that many of the jobs that remain will probably be shifted south to Brisbane, which is what we have seen happen over the past few decades with fly-in fly-out workforces. I always shudder when I hear resources minister Matt Canavan talk with pride about how Brisbane is the biggest mining town in Queensland. He may be happy with that situation, but as far as I am concerned those are jobs that have been taken away from regional Queensland. Of course, both Senator Canavan and the member for Capricornia, Michelle Landry, must bear some personal responsibility for allowing casualisation to spread in the first place. When those people call themselves champions of the mining sector what they really mean is champions of BHP and Glencore, not the people who work at the mines.

To the mining companies I say this: our region will not stand by and watch as more jobs are shifted south. We may not be able to stop automation, but we can at least avoid a repeat of the Western Australian experience where you have operators in Perth controlling trucks in the Pilbara. Every single automation hub needs to be built in Central Queensland—in Rockhampton, Mackay and other mining towns. There should be no such thing as a Brisbane based automation hub. They need to be staffed by permanent employees. BHP and its fellow miners, not to mention the federal government, need to understand that we are absolutely fed up with this and that if they do not listen they are going to have a fight on their hands.