




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

Record of Proceedings, 16 May 2019

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Condamine Electorate

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (2.48 pm): Since the middle of September 2018 the Condamine electorate has had three major project announcements that would provide significant employment opportunities and major investment in the local economy. All of these projects will take advantage of Australia's newest and only privately owned airport, the Wellcamp airport constructed by the Wagner family as well as the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing once fully completed.

In mid-September 2018 the FKG Group announced that it had submitted plans to the Toowoomba Regional Council to develop Queensland's first intensive greenhouse project of this size. The project is set to be developed on 64 hectares of land on the western side of Toowoomba, with expected yields up to 15 times the volume of vegetables a broadacre cropping system can produce. In a time when our population is increasing rapidly, this project could lead the way in how our food will be produced in the future. The project will employ almost 500 people and, once fully operational, with 42 hectares of greenhouses built over four stages, FKG will submit plans to the local council for a 150-megawatt solar-gas power plant to power the greenhouse development, with the carbon dioxide in the greenhouse being carbon neutral.

On 27 September 2018, Qantas announced that its first regional pilot training academy would be located at Wellcamp airport. This is a great boost to our area and highlights the confidence that business has in regional Queensland. The Wagner family committed to constructing the training facility, and work on the site has commenced, with completion expected by late 2019. In the construction stage the project is expected to create 100 direct and 300 indirect jobs, with 160 ongoing employment positions once the facility has opened. An investment of approximately \$35 million is envisaged for the project. Aviation students at the University of Southern Queensland can take advantage of this training facility on their doorstep.

The Canadian company Asterion has committed to developing the world's largest medicinal cannabis farm near Toowoomba. The proposed greenhouse facility will be located on 75 hectares of property adjacent to the Wellcamp airport, with projections once this is fully operational of harvesting approximately 500,000 kilograms of cannabis annually. The project is expected to employ 1,200 full-time permanent staff to manage everything from planting the seed, harvesting and packaging of the final product and everything in between. This means that there will be a huge population boost on the western side of Toowoomba. I once again call on the Minister for Education to look at the proposal for a new high school on the western side of Toowoomba.