




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

Record of Proceedings, 5 September 2019

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

New Acland Mine

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (3.18 pm): I rise today to stand up for the people of New Hope Acland coalmine and for the people of Oakey. As of Monday, some 150 directly employed workers at New Hope's Acland coalmine were told that their services were no longer required. That does not take into account the indirect job losses, including those of contractors and small business owners in the towns around Acland, especially in Oakey.

These difficult conversations with workers began Monday morning as the approvals were not granted by the state government for the stage 3 expansion of the Acland coalmine. This is a result of the continued dithering by this Palaszczuk Labor government. When seats in North Queensland were on the line after a coalition win in the federal election, this government could not have moved any faster to approve Adani. The government has the same capacity here and it has let the people of Condamine down to appease the Greens voters in inner-city Brisbane.

Is the current drought or the continuing issues surrounding water contamination in the town of Oakey not enough for the people of Condamine to deal with? The people of the Condamine electorate are resilient, but just how many more times can they be knocked down before enough is enough? Yesterday's cover story in the *Oakey Champion*, which I table now, might just demonstrate how the people of Oakey are completely fed up.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Oakey Champion*, dated 4 September 2019 (with redactions) [1455](#).

These 150 redundancies are unnecessary. These members of the local community did not have to lose their jobs. This is just the local Labor government playing political games. The effect of job cuts will be widespread. Schools and small businesses in Oakey and the surrounding district will be hit the hardest. These 150 jobs are just the beginning, as many contractors who have contracts with the mine will also be forced into redundancies.

Earlier today the opposition leader, Deb Frecklington, shadow minister Dale Last, and I met with representatives of the Acland coalmine who had flown all the way to Townsville looking for answers. Not only will local economies take a hit but also the viability of the western rail line, with 60 per cent of all rail freight along this corridor coming out of the Acland mine. This will have a direct impact on all other freight, as the western line is heavily subsidised by the New Hope group. Recently, nearly every news outlet had quotes from Minister Lynham saying how quickly and diligently the government was working on the approvals for this project. Were these just words? Did the minister ever have any intention of approving this project? This government does not understand the enormity of its actions. Once again, the people of the Condamine electorate will be forced to fend for themselves without any support from this Palaszczuk government—just like the rest of regional Queensland has become accustomed to.