




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

Record of Proceedings, 6 February 2020

ADJOURNMENT

Animal Cruelty; New Acland Coalmine

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (6.09 pm): In early January my office was contacted regarding the deaths of 32 horses and another eight horses that were in an advanced state of malnutrition and severe neglect at a property near Charlton. These horses had been left to die by the owner, who had previously been convicted in 2005 of animal cruelty. He was reported and investigated in 2017 in a similar set of circumstances on the same property and he claimed the drought as his only excuse on this occasion. This act of extreme animal cruelty was reported to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the RSPCA by the neighbouring property owners and several concerned citizens. Without their intervention all 40 horses would have perished under the most dreadful of conditions.

The Condamine electorate office has been kept updated on the condition of the eight remaining horses since mid-January after making several requests to both the department and the minister's office to be provided with regular reports. The horses are making a slow recovery and an active investigation is being undertaken by the department. I look forward to receiving a copy of the outcome of the investigation in the near future.

My question is: why was Terry Oberle, a person convicted of prior animal cruelty, allowed to own horses, and why do the eight surviving horses remain under his care? These horses had infected bites and fly strike, were emaciated and too weak to stand when first found. That is not something that happens overnight. This neglect had been ongoing for months. If a dog or a cat had been found in these conditions they would have been removed from their owner immediately.

The bodies of all 32 horses remain on the property as it is legally the responsibility of the property owner to remove the carcasses, not that of the lessee of the land. The neighbours have had to endure the stench of rotting bodies during extremely hot and now humid and wet conditions.

Lastly, I would ask the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy: when will you grant the required mining leases for stage 3 of the New Acland mine? After 12 years of seeking approval it is time, especially when the highest court in Queensland has ruled definitively in favour of stage 3. How many stalling tactics can the minister employ to shore up inner-city green votes? It is blatantly obvious now that these tactics are not about winning court cases; they are about stalling decisions. The minister has the power to intervene and make that decision. I call on the minister to do so.