




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

New Acland Coalmine

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (2.55 pm): The New Hope Group has announced yet another round of redundancies for their employees. On 6 July, 14 per cent of the corporate workforce and 15 per cent of Queensland Bulk Handling workers at the port facility were made redundant, which is on top of the 150 redundancies announced in September 2019 for mine site workers and the next round of redundancies is looming. All of that is happening in a Queensland economic climate that is toxic, although not due to the advent of COVID-19, as the Premier and Treasurer would like us to believe. Coronavirus has just added to the Treasury's woes. The dreadful state of Queensland's coffers is because of the mismanagement of the budget bottom line by the government.

New Acland stage 3 would create 187 new jobs within the first six months, 487 new jobs within 18 months and inject \$7 billion into the Queensland economy. One must wonder what part of that the Palaszczuk government does not understand. In June 2020, a motion to get this shovel-ready project up and running was passed by the Queensland Liberal and National senators in the federal parliament and supported by senators from other parties. In the past few weeks, three federal Labor members have thrown their wholehearted support behind New Acland stage 3, much to the annoyance of both the Premier and the federal opposition leader, Anthony Albanese, who has issued a gag order to his team to stop discussing the mine expansion. The 13 July edition of the *Australian* newspaper carried a scathing article from Queensland Labor Senator Anthony Chisholm, asking why it must take 13 years to approve the expansion of such a job-creating project. That is the very question that I have asked in this place time and time again.

The Toowoomba Regional Council has one of the worst unemployment figures in Australia. The New Acland project is on its doorstep, with many jobs ready to go. Recently, Mayor Paul Antonio stated—

Because of the ineptitude of the government this project has been sitting here for 13 years.

Truer words could not have been spoken. The Premier is like a broken record when asked about this project: 'The matter is before the court. Everyone in the House knows that.' That is always the response. Everyone in the House knows that Minister Lynham could approve the mine with the stroke of a pen, just as this government did with Adani. The New Acland situation has nothing to do with water, dust or noise. There are no environmental conditions at all. The appeal is being run on a legal technicality, unlike the Adani issue which was about associated water. There is only one reason that this has not been passed and it is green votes in the inner city—

(Time expired)