




Speech By
Michael Berkman

MEMBER FOR MAIWAR

Record of Proceedings, 16 November 2023

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Coal

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (2.59 pm): This Labor government has approved another coalmine expansion. Last week I received a media release from the resources minister gleefully declaring that his government had approved a new coalmine expansion in the Bowen Basin. This is, of course, just the latest project that Labor has given the tick to. Their friends at the federal level have approved seven new or expanded coalmines and 232 gas wells since taking power last year. This Queensland Labor government is not content with just approving new coal and gas. They are now going one step further and funding it with public money.

In another media release the same day as they approved a new coalmine expansion, Labor spruiked \$21 million of publicly funded grants to expand gas exploration in Queensland. They helpfully included in this media release that this Labor government has opened up 20,000 square kilometres of Queensland for gas exploration since 2017.

One could be forgiven for assuming that these media releases are in fact the brochure Labor put together for the gas industry to make sure those sweet, sweet donations keep coming in. I bet it will not be putting that on any of its election flyers in the seats that are threatened by the Greens. Are we going to see the member for Cooper putting up a billboard in Ashgrove spruiking '20,000 square kilometres of gas approvals', or what about the member for Greenslopes? How about a big billboard on Logan Road that says something like 'Labor—giving \$21 million in public handouts to the gas industry'? Are we going to see any of that? In just a few hours Labor and LNP members will be toasting the destruction of the Lake Eyre Basin with the gas executives at their bring the basin to Brisbane cocktail reception here in parliament, sponsored by Santos. I could barely believe my eyes when I saw this in the inbox.

Labor has promised at every election since 2015 to protect the Channel Country rivers of the Lake Eyre Basin. New gas exploration in the basin means more emissions, interruptions to some of the last free-flowing desert rivers in the world and toxic chemicals threatening local ecology and Indigenous cultural heritage. Traditional owners and conservationists have worked tirelessly for years to protect the Channel Country, but while they wait for Labor to make up its mind Labor is organising cocktail functions here at Parliament House with the very companies that want to wreck the Channel Country. It is no wonder this government does not want to increase gas royalties. The Treasurer went to great lengths this morning to avoid just straight up answering the question that the member for South Brisbane asked. It would make for some really awkward chat over the cosmopolitans tonight I imagine, wouldn't it, Treasurer? Labor members, enjoy your cosmos and pina colodas with Santos execs. I hope the donations are worth it. Make sure you get some good connections with them for when the members for Cooper, Miller, Greenslopes and Stafford are all looking for a job next year—

(Time expired)