



More calls for Stage 3 to be approved

Australian Resources and Energy Group, the Australian Mines and Metals Association (AMMA) has joined the Queensland Resource Council and other industry groups in urging the Queensland Government to finally approve a shovel-ready project that would create hundreds of jobs during these uncertain times.

AMMA Chief Executive Steve Knott AM (*pictured right*) said the Oakey region and the wider Queensland economy needs the jobs Stage 3 can provide now more than ever.

"Australia's national resources and energy group throws its full support behind New Hope Group's campaign to gain approval for its expansion project and deliver a jobs boost to Queensland during these extraordinarily challenging times," Mr Knott said.

"It is time the Queensland Government approved Stage Three of New Hope Group's New Acland Mine, bringing to fruition the near-500 jobs it will create - including almost 200 within the first six months.

"In addition, the project will inject \$7 billion into the Queensland economy while also delivering supply chain certainty for New Hope's Queensland customers, who support 14,000+ workers; and \$2.5 billion to local suppliers."

New Hope Group, an Australian company which has operated in Queensland for more than 60 years, has been seeking approval for stage three of its New Acland Coal Mine for 13 years.

Mr Knott implored the Queensland Government to prioritise jobs over petty politicking.

"New Hope Group is an Australian-owned energy company with a long track record of local employment, responsible environmental stewardship and being a well-respected and integral member of the Darling Downs community," he said.

"This is a respected large employer not asking for a handout, taxpayer

support or any special government consideration - they are simply asking the Queensland Government to put its green-politics to one side and make the call on this long-awaited project."

Mr Knott said the government's lack of urgency or concern for an important regional community employer and its local employees defied belief.

"The company's planned expansion had passed a significant number of rigorous assessments, including by the Federal Government's Independent Expert Scientific Committee," he said.

"It is time for the Premier to stand up for local jobs and regional communities by swiftly resolving unnecessarily protracted approvals processes for important projects such as Stage Three of New Acland Mine."

CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR STAGE 3
As the Queensland

Government pushes its infrastructure program as an initial solution to the rising unemployment, the Queensland Liberal National Party (LNP) and Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise (TSBE) have also backed calls for the Stage 3 project to be approved.

LNP Deputy Leader and Shadow Treasurer Tim Mander said the Toowoomba region is showing this economic downturn as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reports the lost more than 12,000 jobs in the past year.

He said workforce has shrunk from 75,170 in March 2019 to just 63,030 last month with unemployment now standing at 5%, after rising

0.4% last month.

"These alarming figures don't include the huge job losses that have occurred because of the coronavirus crisis," Mr Mander said.

"Unemployed workers in Toowoomba are desperate, but they're getting no help from Labor.

"Unlike Labor, the LNP will also back our resources industry and allow the New Acland expansion to go-ahead.

"Only an LNP Government will get regional Queensland working again."

TSBE's Ali Davenport said the business advocacy

organisation has been working with New Acland and parent company New Hope to help promote the project and the need to have Stage 3 approved.

"TSBE has continued to work with New Hope Group to advocate the approval of New Acland Stage 3 expansion, and now more than ever, an approval would not only mean major economic benefits, but would also provide a lifeline to those who have recently lost their jobs due to COVID-19," Ms Davenport said.

