



# ***STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE***

**Members present:**

Mr CG Whiting MP—Chair  
Mr JJ McDonald MP  
Mr MJ Hart MP  
Mr RI Katter MP  
Mr JE Madden MP  
Mr TJ Smith MP

**Staff present:**

Ms S Galbraith—Committee Secretary  
Ms M Telford—Assistant Committee Secretary  
Ds K Kowol—Assistant Committee Secretary

## **PUBLIC BRIEFING—INQUIRY INTO THE QUEENSLAND CLIMATE TRANSITION BILL 2023**

### **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

**FRIDAY, 27 MARCH 2023**

**Brisbane**

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### **The committee met at 10.59 am.**

**CHAIR:** Good morning. I declare open this public briefing for the committee's inquiry into the Queensland Climate Transition Bill 2023. My name is Chris Whiting. I am the member for Bancroft and chair of the committee. I would like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay our respects to elders past and present. We are very fortunate to live in a country with two of the oldest continuing cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whose lands, winds and waters we all share. With me here today are Jim McDonald, the member for Lockyer and deputy chair; Jim Madden, the member for Ipswich West; Michael Hart, the member for Burleigh; Tom Smith, the member for Bundaberg; and Robbie Katter, the member for Traeger.

On behalf of the committee I welcome Michael Berkman MP, the member for Maiwar, who will be briefing us this morning on the bill. This briefing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the parliament's standing rules and orders. In this regard, the public may be excluded from the hearing at the discretion of the committee. Only committee members and Mr Berkman can participate in today's proceedings.

These proceedings are being recorded and broadcast live on the parliament's website. Media may be present and are subject to the committee's media rules and my direction at all times. You may be filmed or photographed during the proceedings and images may also appear on the parliament's website and social media pages. Could you please turn your mobile phones and computers off or onto silent mode.

### **BERKMAN, Mr Michael, Member for Maiwar, Parliament of Queensland**

**CHAIR:** Michael, I now invite you to brief the committee after which committee members may have some questions for you.

**Mr Berkman:** Thank you very much, Chair. Thank you to the committee for the opportunity to brief you on this bill this morning. Before anything else, I want to add my acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and work today and pay my respects to their elders past and present. I make a commitment to continue to work with emerging leaders as we do the work to properly acknowledge unceded First Nation sovereignty and develop treaties with First Nations people across the state.

This bill is effectively about acting on things that the government already claims to accept. The government says that it accepts the science of climate change and that it is committed to meeting our obligations under the Paris Agreement. The key premise of that agreement is that we must keep average global warming below two degrees, and preferably 1.5 degrees, above pre-industrial levels by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. States bear a burden to reduce emissions on a scale and time frame that is proportionate to their wealth or means and their contribution to global emissions. Queensland is a wealthy state and a very significant contributor to global emissions, and we can and must take significant action to cut emissions now.

The bill legislates emission reduction targets that are in line with the current science and our obligations under the Paris Agreement. The current stated targets are neither of these things. The government is committed to 30 per cent emissions reduction on 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero by 2050. This bill would set targets of 75 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 and net zero by 2035. Those targets are based on 2022 Climateworks Centre modelling on emissions pathways for Australia to help limit global warming to 1½ degrees.

The bill establishes the Queensland Climate Transition Authority as a new independent statutory authority to develop the Queensland climate transition strategic plan by the end of 2024. The plan must set out strategies and policies for Queensland to meet the emissions reduction targets and phase out fossil fuel exports by 2030, while ensuring employment stability and income security for affected workers and communities. It must be developed through a collaborative, place-based approach in consultation with those groups. The Queensland Climate Transition Authority would be a central coordinating body to support government departments and existing agencies in implementing this plan.

The release of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report just last week—the sixth synthesis report—is incredibly timely. This report tells us what is at risk if we do not take that significant action now. The report concludes unequivocally that human activity has caused global warming and we are already seeing, in the words of the IPCC, ‘widespread and rapid changes as a result’. This includes more extreme weather and disasters with, again, in the IPCC’s words, ‘widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages to nature and people’. The key message of this report is that it is not too late to avoid heating above 1½ degrees and, in fact, we have never been better equipped than we are now to solve the climate crisis, but we need deep, rapid and sustained cuts to emissions and we need them right now.

Logically one might think it goes without saying, but apparently it is not the case so I will say it clearly here, just as UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in his statement accompanying the IPCC report: ‘We cannot open or expand any new coal or gas projects anywhere.’ We simply cannot afford to add these new emissions to the already stretched carbon budget, and if we do we will not meet our targets. We cannot keep warming below 1½ degrees if we continue to open new coal and gas projects. If we fail to do that, some ecosystems and communities will likely not survive.

That is why this bill implements an immediate ban on new coal, oil and gas approvals. There is simply no other pathway for us that is consistent with the science. This has been confirmed by the IPCC report and many other experts, including the International Energy Agency almost two years ago now. Alternatives to coal, oil and gas, including metallurgical coal, already exist and there is no argument to expand the production of resources that not only have no economic future under a safe climate scenario but also represent an existential threat to the very future of humanity. Instead, the IPCC report—and every other expert report for the last decade or more—tells us that we need to phase out all coal, oil and gas production. Modelling by University of Manchester experts says developed nations must stop producing coal by 2030 and gas by no later than 2034.

In Queensland—a state with an abundance of renewable energy resources—the government has recently committed to an ambitious expansion of renewables generation and storage infrastructure. We also have a wealth of other export industry opportunities like critical minerals and green steel. There is a strong argument that we do not need to rely on coal and gas exports and have an obligation to phase them out by 2030. That is what this bill proposes.

As I mentioned earlier, the government says it accepts the science of climate change and our obligations under the Paris Agreement. This bill is about taking action consistent with those commitments. The government has also agreed that workers who are affected by the economic transformation necessary to reduce emissions deserve security and support to transition away from coal and gas. They have indicated this by developing a workers’ charter and proposing an energy industry council to provide power station workers with a job guarantee and reskilling support to move into renewables or other opportunities. They have not yet proposed any equivalent for people employed in mining and exporting coal and gas.

This bill simply extends the assumption—that is, the assumption that workers are not to blame for climate crisis and that they deserve a say in their future and a stable income and job security—beyond the domestic energy sector. It does this by tasking the Queensland Climate Transition Authority with developing a transition plan in consultation with unions, employers and community members involved in or affected by coal, oil and gas extraction for export. That plan should include free retraining, a redeployment plan and a job guarantee with support for new opportunities in areas like critical minerals, mining and processing, and local green manufacturing and exports.

In closing, I acknowledge again that this is a significant bill. It makes significant proposals for an enormous challenge. The UN Secretary-General last week said we need a quantum leap of warp speed climate action. In that light, this bill is not unreasonable or impossible or even pushing the parcel further to make a point. It is the only proposal on the table that is consistent with the climate science and the economic realities we will face as a state. I welcome any questions from the committee.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Mr Berkman. I know the member for Bundaberg has some questions. I will go to him first.

**Mr SMITH:** Thank you joining us. I turn to division 2 of the bill—‘Dealing with fossil fuel authorities’. It has the application of the division. It states—

This division applies in relation to an authority (a **fossil fuel authority**) under another Act that authorises an entity to do something ...

We are not talking about another statutory authority but the authority under another act to grant mining, exploration and so forth; is that correct?

**Mr Berkman:** That is right. The proposal in division 2 that you have referred to provides for the authority—that is, the Climate Transition Authority—to deal in certain ways with existing coal and gas authorities. We went back and forth a bit with the drafters around this to ensure that the definition of ‘fossil fuel authority’ is broad enough to ensure it captures all of those primary authorities that are fundamental to the production and export of our fossil fuel resources. That includes things like leases and licences under the petroleum and gas act, exploration permits for coal or mining leases for coal resources, but it is not so broad as to capture the incidentals that you might need for running an existing operation. It is not going to grind any existing project to a halt right now, but it does prevent the issuing of new authorities.

**Mr SMITH:** When you are talking about your proposed authority as opposed to other authorities, you are not talking about other statutory authorities, just authorities in terms of being able to grant mining exploration authorities and so forth? We are not talking—

**CHAIR:** Permits and licences.

**Mr SMITH:** Permits and licences is what you are talking about when you say ‘authority’? You are not talking about another government body?

**Mr Berkman:** No, that is right. That is summed up in subsection 14(2), which defines ‘fossil fuel authority’.

**Mr SMITH:** Wonderful. If there is an authority granted under another act, is it extreme for another statutory authority to be able to override an authority granted through an act of parliament?

**Mr Berkman:** No. One of the fundamental purposes of the transition authority is to be able to deal with existing authorities in a way that is structured and seeks to achieve the objectives of the transition plan. It does, I suppose, make for a relatively powerful body in the authority. If we were to compare it to other statutory authorities—take the Coordinator-General, for example; that is an extraordinarily powerful body that exists in Queensland. It has particular functions and its functions are directed at achieving particular outcomes; namely, the objectives under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act. This is just a different authority performing parallel functions that necessarily engages with these kinds of fossil fuel authorities if it is to achieve the objectives that it is required to achieve under the act and that the act itself seeks to achieve.

**Mr SMITH:** You mentioned the Coordinator-General. Is there another statutory authority in Queensland that can override acts of parliament through non-elected board members?

**Mr Berkman:** No, this does not propose to override acts of parliament. This is, in itself, a separate act which proposes that the Climate Transition Authority will have power to deal with certain different types of fossil fuel authorities which are themselves considered, decided, approved, issued under various different acts of parliament. It is not overriding parliament per se; it is creating a targeted power or authority to deal with these.

**Mr SMITH:** Let us say, for instance, an MDL comes before the Minister for Resources and the Minister for Resources grants an MDL. Would your authority have the ability to amend or cancel that authority of the minister?

**Mr Berkman:** I think it is very clear in the terms of the bill that that is what it is intended to do, yes.

**Mr SMITH:** Your proposal is that seven non-elected members of parliament who form a board can then override the parliamentary process and ministerial discretion?

**Mr Berkman:** It is not a parliamentary process; it is a statutory process that is decided by the parliament. It is not always exercised by the minister, either. We need to be clear about that.

**Mr SMITH:** But in this example, if the minister granted exploration or an MDL this authority would be able to override that determination of the minister?

**Mr Berkman:** Yes, and that is the minister acting in an executive function as opposed to a parliamentary function. We are talking about an authority that engages with certain exercises of executive function of the government, and it does have certain powers to cancel or to amend or to otherwise deal with fossil fuel authorities with the explicit objective of achieving emissions reduction targets that are compatible with a safe future and one that will not lead to ongoing impacts. I know that in your community, member for Bundaberg, you would be well familiar with the risks that come with flooding of the Burnett. Nearby communities like Moore Park are some of the most exposed to coastal hazard risks around the state. The frank reality that we have to face up to is that those communities in your local area are not going to have a safe future if we do not, as a substantial contributor to global emissions, do the work to bring those emissions down in line with our obligations under the Paris Agreement.

**Mr SMITH:** At risk of getting into conversation, as you well know, member for Maiwar, I have spearheaded the closing of an MDL proposal. I guess my concern is more around parliamentary procedures—the way that we have parliament here and the authority given to members who are elected against non-elected members of a board who are handpicked by a premier of the day being able to override decisions of a minister or override authorities granted under an act of parliament that was given assent by the Governor because of the Legislative Assembly. I just wonder if that is extreme or, in another way, is that very rare in terms of: is there another authority that can override parliamentary procedure or the executive government in such a way as this is proposed?

**Mr Berkman:** I do not have an example on hand for you, but I think in some ways you are treating what is proposed under this piece of legislation as somehow different from other legislative processes that are established. Indeed, this does not leave those powers of revocation or amendment with the minister; it leaves it with an authority that is properly constituted and appropriately qualified to deal with these sorts of issues. I think the insinuation that there is something improper about a statutory authority being empowered in this way is something of an odd one and not one that I would agree with at all.

**Mr SMITH:** I think we might politely agree to disagree, but thank you, member for Maiwar. I do appreciate your contribution here.

**Mr McDONALD:** Thank you, member, for being here. I have a couple of questions regarding the development of the bill. Was there a particular situation or event that triggered you to put the private member's bill together?

**Mr Berkman:** The absence of a transition authority is something that I have been aware is a significant issue in Queensland for a long while. The risk of not having a coordinating authority like this is that both in our energy sector and in the resource sector we do not, without a coordinated approach, provide any protections for those communities that are ultimately exposed to the whims of the market, be that the domestic energy market or the international resource market, like seaborne thermal coal, for example. The ups and downs of that have a direct impact on communities in Queensland. That is not something that is new. We have not had an authority like that at any point in the past, as far as I am aware certainly. Obviously elements of what we might have proposed have changed ever so slightly because of the Energy and Jobs Plan and how that deals with job security for energy sector workers, but, again, that certainly did not precipitate this bill. I think if anything it kind of flows quite directly from some work that has been going on in Central Queensland around transition—what it looks like on the ground in local communities and the kind of strong support that exists for place-based, community-driven responses to the inevitable transition. I hope that answers your question.

**Mr McDONALD:** It was really about whether there was a specific event or activity that caused you to put the bill together. Obviously you have identified some perceived problems, but was there any particular event that caused you to develop the bill?

**Mr Berkman:** I could not point to any one thing. This IPCC report that I have referred to, I am sure you are aware, is one of a very long series of reports that the IPCC has done. This is the final of four reports that were released as part of this sixth assessment report process. We have already in the last couple of years seen the release of three other really substantial bodies of work for the sixth assessment report. The first is the advanced progress in the physical science, our understanding of climate systems and the dynamics around greenhouse gas emissions and global warming, the second was around the risks and vulnerability that that creates for human systems and society, and the final one looked at mitigation opportunities. I suppose all of that work is constantly progressing. Each and every time the IPCC puts something out, it reinforces the severity of the issues. We have almost always underestimated the extent of the warming risk and the risks that follow from that in terms of increased natural hazards, health risks, economic risks and the like. It really is a very long progression of information that has been developed and released over time and the concurrent inaction on the part of governments to really do what is required if we act in accord with the science.

**Mr McDONALD:** When did you first start to put this bill together?

**Mr Berkman:** I would have to go back and look through emails to see exactly when the drafting instructions were put together.

**Mr McDONALD:** Six months or 12 months?

**Mr Berkman:** I could not tell you off the top of my head. If you really want to know, I can find out when we first sent drafting instructions, but for what it is worth I can say it is something I have been thinking towards for some time.

**Mr McDONALD:** Did you engage with the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel to develop it?

**Mr Berkman:** Yes. We do not get anything before the parliament without getting OQPC to draft it for us.

**Mr McDONALD:** It would be helpful to understand when it occurred. In the explanatory notes it says that the impacts of this bill and the setting up of the authority are not going to cost a lot because people could volunteer or there would be no costs associated with the board, but what would be taken away? We are all busy people, and for those who would be participating in such an authority there would have to be something they give up to do this job properly. Have you thought about that?

**Mr Berkman:** Yes, sure. If I can rewind a little bit. In answering this question, I appreciate that no-one on the table, bar the member for Traeger, has probably had the experience of putting together a private member's bill, but we are very constrained—

**Mr HART:** I would not say that.

**Mr Berkman:** My apologies, member for Burleigh. As non-government members we are constrained in what we can propose without a letter from the Governor. I think everyone would probably recall a disallowance motion that tried to deal with the revenue aspects of that. Any appropriations, any spending, cannot be done without a letter from the Governor, so we simply had to propose a structure that does not assume any spending. It obviously allows for the Premier, I think as it is structured, to provide for remuneration for the board and, indeed, the authority itself, when it is established, would have to be dealt with through future appropriations to provide whatever costs are associated with that.

**Mr McDONALD:** I understand. In terms of renewable energy, it is very important for our community, but so is reliability and affordability. If we look at the experience in the EU, a number of different places over there, reliability is a big issue. Can you assure Queenslanders that reliability and affordability will be part of that equation while we move towards renewable energy?

**Mr Berkman:** I certainly understand the thrust of your question, but it is a little tangential to the bill as it is drafted. This is much more focused on emissions reduction targets and transition for communities through that decarbonisation process. The government's Energy and Jobs Plan deals much more directly with the question of renewables expansion and those renewable energy targets. I think where this bill is really focused is on the gaps that remain, because renewable energy is only part of the story. That does actually deal with decarbonisation in a comprehensive way for the state of Queensland. I guess to go to the question of cost, obviously reliability demands the kind of firming infrastructure that has been proposed in the Energy and Jobs Plan through pumped hydro projects—without going into the specifics of those projects and any issues with them—and obviously battery storage, whether that is residential or big batteries, will play a role in that. The question of cost for consumers—electricity prices—is a very real issue and not one I would seek to downplay at all.

**Mr McDONALD:** That is why I do not think the question is tangential for Queenslanders.

**Mr Berkman:** Sorry, I am not suggesting it is tangential for Queenslanders but more to the bill. It is not a direct focus of the proposal put forward in the bill. If we look at cost, yes, Queenslanders need very real cost-of-living relief, especially around something as fundamental and basic as electricity. From a government perspective, though, I think any cost that might be involved in providing that cost-of-living relief or subsidising or providing electricity at a rate Queenslanders can afford—the make-up of our energy supply needs to be viewed in the context of the cost of inaction on climate change. We have seen again this year some of the most expensive, if not the most expensive, natural disasters the state has ever seen. In that context I would argue that government has some work to do, but cost to government as opposed to Queenslanders should not be a barrier to this kind of action.

**CHAIR:** I am going to extend this briefing to 11.40. I have a couple of questions following on from what the deputy chair said. The director and chair will be volunteers at this stage?

**Mr Berkman:** They can only be remunerated as determined by the Premier.

**CHAIR:** You do have future costs implications on a budget in this bill.

**Mr Berkman:** As I have explained, I cannot make a proposal that will have that effect. Obviously my view is that the government should fund and support an authority like this. The fact that I cannot propose that in legislation without that letter from the Governor I do not think needs to undermine the purpose, the thrust, the shape otherwise of the authority and what the bill proposes.

**CHAIR:** If this authority can cancel or amend mining or exploration authorities and those decisions are final and conclusive, as you said, if you are cancelling or amending, surely that would generate legal actions or actions that bodies that hold these authorities could take. That would

certainly be a substantial cost implication if you are cancelling mining authorities that would immediately generate actions that would need substantial amounts of money to meet those particular challenges.

**Mr Berkman:** If the authority is operating within its statutory remit, I think it is difficult to jump to conclusions about what kind of legal actions might be commenced. Obviously people—companies, authority holders—can bring whatever action they see fit, but whether they bring a sensible case that is actually going to go anywhere is a very different question. One point that I tried to make in the introduction of the bill is that the concept of carbon budgets and the very limited global emissions that we are allowed if we are to keep average global temperatures below two or 1½ degrees is not new. This is something that for decades now those holders of authorities would have been well aware of. Again, I think the reasonableness of any kinds of claims for compensation on that basis could be very well called into question. Clause 19, as you referred to, states that those decisions around fossil fuel authorities are not subject to declaratory, injunctive or other Supreme Court orders or orders of another court or subject to the Judicial Review Act. The intention is to empower the authority in such a way that it can deal with these authorities without creating the kinds of legal risk you are talking about.

**CHAIR:** Legal action might actually be triggered by the bill itself and the government of the day would need to defend that if a mining authority took the government to court on section 19, whether it be applicable or constitutional or whatever you would like to say. Certainly there is the risk of substantial legal action being triggered by actions from this bill. I think that will be a substantial impact on government revenue, besides the fact of having to employ people. I do not think we need to be Nostradamus to say that there may be a legal backlash.

**Mr Berkman:** Should I take that as a comment? I am not clear what the basis of any kind of—

**CHAIR:** No, take that as a comment.

**Mr Berkman:** I would just add that I am not clear on what basis you could suggest that the passage of the bill itself would create any particular legal liability. As an act of parliament, that is something we are authorised, as the legislators of the state, to legislate as we see fit.

**CHAIR:** I understand what you are hoping to see there. That is my opinion.

**Mr HART:** Michael, the members are dancing around the issue a fair bit, so let me ask you a direct question: have you structured this bill to avoid this bill being a money bill, and are you concerned at all about setting a precedent for future bills?

**Mr Berkman:** No, I am not worried about setting a precedent. It is just the unfortunate reality of the situation. If I could have structured a bill that included appropriations and even sufficient revenue measures to meet that spending need, I would absolutely have done so. It is just one of those issues we have to deal with as non-government members, which you would understand.

**Mr HART:** Did you do any modelling before you put this bill to the House to see what sort of financial impact it may have on Queensland and what impact it may have on our energy system, for instance, or our industry? Is that a concern to you?

**Mr Berkman:** It does not focus so directly on energy systems. As to the question of modelling, without a parliamentary budget office of the kind that exists in the federal parliament it is very difficult for us to access that expertise. Maybe more importantly, the kind of modelling that you are suggesting I think presupposes a lot of the content of the climate transition plan. I do not know that you could sensibly model the kinds of economic consequences of this proposal without actually knowing what is in that plan and without having had the engagement with affected communities and workers around what the transition looks like.

**Mr HART:** One of the things it says is 'phase out thermal coal, oil and gas exports from Queensland'.

**Mr Berkman:** That is right, yes.

**Mr HART:** It does not affect the rest of Australia; it is just Queensland.

**Mr Berkman:** We are the Queensland parliament, so yes.

**Mr HART:** How is it going to be enforced in just Queensland? Is there anything in this bill that stops someone from New South Wales exporting Queensland coal? Even if it is second-hand, can we ship it to Sydney and then ship it out from there?

**Mr Berkman:** My understanding of how the bill is structured is that it seeks to deal with any export capacity. I would imagine that, again, this is to be dealt with by the transition plan. I find it difficult to think of a scenario where it is going to be in someone's commercial interests to ship interstate.

**Mr HART:** If they cannot do it from Queensland they will work around it, for sure.

**Mr Berkman:** If they do not have the relevant authorities for the production—

**Mr HART:** Let's move on from that. This is just about exports. What about using oil and gas in Queensland that has already been approved? Are we continuing to use that for the next 50 or 100 years?

**Mr Berkman:** I would argue not. I do not know how that would be feasible under net zero emissions by 2035.

**Mr HART:** This only stops exports. It does not seem to stop local use.

**Mr Berkman:** Well, not explicitly. But, again, this is something that is more directly dealt with in the Energy and Jobs Plan, the existing structures that the government has put together. We are yet to see legislation to make that a concrete legislative proposal. The emissions reduction targets that are legislated by the bill really deal with that element of domestic statewide decarbonisation, with both the 2030 and 2035 targets.

**Mr HART:** We are in 2023 now. This is not going to come to the parliament until 2024 or late 2023.

**Mr Berkman:** Unless the government recognises the urgency of it and brings it on terribly quickly.

**Mr HART:** It is going to take six months, I imagine, to put this board in place. That leaves 5½ years to implement this export ban and fix the gaps that may be created by that.

**Mr Berkman:** It is a real shame we have not moved on it sooner.

**Mr HART:** Has anyone else in the world gone this far?

**Mr Berkman:** I could not give you a complete global snapshot, I am sorry.

**Mr HART:** Do you think it is reasonable that Queensland should lead the way here on this sort of thing?

**Mr Berkman:** I think we absolutely should lead the way. If we do not, we stand to lose a whole bunch of economic opportunity. To use a body like the transitional authority to focus our workforce, resources and political capital as a state on expansion into those critical new economy minerals represents an extraordinary opportunity for real working people on the ground. Additionally, we have all the wherewithal here in Australia to be really leading the charge and doing cutting-edge work on the evolution of the green steel industry. If we do not, in a very deliberate and structured way, focus our efforts on those future industries, we will miss opportunities similar to what we have missed in the transition to renewables in decades past.

**Mr HART:** What about the consequences of destroying the state financially if we move as a first mover here? Is that part of the sacrifice we make?

**Mr Berkman:** I do not agree with the assertion that we would be destroying the state financially. Yes, coal royalties are a huge amount of revenue that needs to be replaced, but there are ways to do that. I think the expansion of the critical minerals sector, addressing the very low royalty rates that we have for the rest of our state's mineral wealth and how little of that is returned to Queenslanders for this kind of forward planning and transition work, is certainly a way we could address it. As I said before, if we had it within our kitbag as crossbenchers to propose these kinds of revenue measures, that is precisely the sort of thing we could have included in a bill like this to more succinctly step out how that revenue loss could be offset over time in other sectors.

**Mr HART:** Do you think that is another change we need to make in the future, to allow revenue bills by non-government members?

**Mr Berkman:** I think there would be value in it. I think revenue bills can serve a whole bunch of different purposes, and we kind of touched on this in the debate on the disallowance motion. It is not just about raising revenue. These kinds of economic incentives can serve a great variety of policy purposes. Yes, I think there are really good arguments to allow for policy to be put forward in the form of legislation that is an appropriations bill from non-government members.

**Mr MADDEN:** Thanks very much for coming here today, member for Maiwar, and explaining your bill and allowing us to ask you these questions. My question relates more to the social impact of your bill on the Queensland coal and gas industry. It is estimated that 20,000 people work in the coal industry. That is ignoring the gas industry. I come from Ipswich where, as you are well aware, the first coalmines in Queensland were established. We had coalmines in Ipswich up until about two years ago. My nephew worked in a coalmine. The connection with coal in Ipswich is extremely important. Brisbane



We are talking about multigenerational connections to coal. That situation in Ipswich has been duplicated in towns like Emerald, Blackwater and Moranbah, where you have children going to school whose aunts and uncles, mothers and fathers have worked in the coal industry. They are working out their futures on the assumption that they will be able to follow their aunts, uncles and parents into the coal industry, but your bill would stop that. Your bill would stop the possibility of those young people moving into an industry where they want to work. It will also have a social impact on those towns like Emerald, Moranbah and Blackwater. There would be a significant decrease in the number of people living in those towns. My question to you is: what do you say to that 15-year-old whose whole life has revolved around staying in Emerald, Blackwater or Moranbah where their grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles live and you stymie their possibility of following on? What do you say to that 15-year-old?

**Mr Berkman:** I would say to that 15-year-old that the precise purpose of this bill is to create a structured, staged transition that will allow them as a member of the community and the rest of that community to lay out what their future should look like, to engage with the inevitability that we will have to get out of fossil fuels. Even if we blow a 1.5-degree or two-degree average global warming target, we will at some point have to face the inevitability of fossil fuel resources being phased out globally. If these communities are not given a say in how that happens, if they are not given the necessary support to work towards alternative employment opportunities in their communities, then that invariably leads to the kind of social decay, the loss of community fabric that I think you are really referring to in your question. The point is not that this bill is going to make something happen; it is presenting time lines for our transition out of fossil fuels that are consistent with what the climate science says we need to achieve but is structured in a way that is entirely directed at doing that alongside the community, with the community's input and in a way that gives them the brightest possible future and security around the ongoing life of their towns and employment security for folks who might otherwise have sought employment in fossil fuels.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. We do have more questions, but we have unfortunately run out of time. That concludes this briefing. We have one question on notice. That was about the time line in terms of drafting the bill. The deputy chair was looking for more information on the length of time and the process of drafting that bill.

**Mr Berkman:** I have been given some very deft assistance. The drafting instructions were sent in September last year, if that answers your question.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. That concludes this briefing. Thank you to everyone who has participated today. Thank you to our Hansard reporters and thank you to our secretariat. A transcript of these proceedings will be available on the committee's webpage in due course. I declare this briefing closed.

**The committee adjourned at 11.41 am.**