



Speech by

## Ms Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 12 February 2009

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### GREENHOUSE GAS STORAGE BILL

**Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (11.36 am): I rise to support the Greenhouse Gas Storage Bill 2008. In doing so, I believe this is definitely a bill for the future or, to go even further, for the future of the earth, particularly when it comes to this issue of climate change. In my view, the scientific evidence is overwhelming. Climate change is occurring on planet earth and the industrial advances which have been made in the history of the world over the last 100 years or so are undoubtedly, in my mind, contributing to this dilemma.

Daily we read and hear about worse floods, fires, droughts and other natural disasters in the making. The planet is also experiencing loss of glaciers, wetlands and land degradation. I was fortunate on two occasions to have been present when Al Gore himself presented his information. It really is spine-tingling and one is spellbound when he documents what we have been doing to this earth over a period of time and the level of greenhouse gases that we are now, as industrialised nations around the world, emitting compared to what we were, say, 100 years ago.

I take this opportunity, because we have heard of worse floods and fires in recent times, to offer my condolences to all the residents of north Queensland who have been devastated by floods. I note that the members for Hinchinbrook and Mount Isa are in the House and that it affects many of their constituents. I also extend my condolences to the Victorian fire victims. I have seen daily on the news endless reports of the hardships that they are facing: the loss of lives, the loss of homes and the loss of much-loved possessions. Whether or not these fires, these floods and these droughts that we are seeing in Australia are emanating from natural causes or are the result of greenhouse gases, we have to take steps to do something about climate change.

This bill provides a process for the capture, generally from power stations, and transport of a greenhouse gas stream that will then be permanently stored underground. I believe this bill is a cornerstone for all greenhouse gas storage projects planned for Queensland, and it is intended to provide security for investment in this new industry. It is going to be a new industry for Queensland. Queensland, too, is a good place to start with such technology. The bill provides a way for us to lead the country and assist in ensuring that we do do something about climate change and the storage of greenhouse gas.

Queensland's electricity is generated, as we know, largely by coal and we have enormous coal resources. We are lucky to have such vast coal resources, and therefore coalmining is a significant industry. Consequently, the technology in greenhouse gas storage is of significant interest to many people in Queensland. There has been much research in this area. I welcome Tarong Energy and CSIRO, who jointly in a pilot project at the Tarong Power Station are looking at this new technology. The potential of this new technology and this partnership will be for the storage of 1,500 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions in a postcombustion capture process.

I welcome the establishment in the bill of separate authorities—one which will allow the carrying out of exploration of greenhouse gas stream storage sites and a second for storage activities. I believe separating both is a good way to go, and I think the authorities will be able to fulfil their duties quite reasonably. With anything new of course there will be risks, and it is recognised that there is no such thing

as a perfect site for geological storage. The bill includes a number of protections, and I want to quickly go through those protections.

We have independent experts who will be assessing the veracity of all information from interested parties. I welcome the fact that we have such expertise and that these experts will be independent in assessing this information. The minister can refuse an application on public interest grounds, and that remains the ultimate sanction for the project. Obviously, if there are unacceptable risks I believe that this is a most sensible protection to have in any legislation. Common law liability will remain with the holder of the lease that undertook the greenhouse stream injection and storage, and this is consistent with the Victorian legislation. So if the issue of common law liability arises, the holder of the lease will not get away with anything under this bill. Finally, there is a requirement for a site plan, covering the very important areas of health and safety and other mitigating factors, to be submitted by applicants.

This is new legislation. This is new technology. It is necessary and, in a way, it is also exciting legislation, setting a path to attempt to tackle one of the most important issues facing the world—climate change. I see some young students in the gallery. This is a measure that hopefully will make the world better for our children in the years to come. It is a very important bill that we are passing here today. It is about capturing greenhouse gases, which will help prevent climate change. I commend the bill to the House.