



Speech by

Rachel Nolan

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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GREENHOUSE GAS STORAGE BILL

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (4.00 pm): I rise in support of the Greenhouse Gas Storage Bill 2008. Greenhouse gas storage technology is of significant interest to Queenslanders, as coal-fired generation is a major proportion of Queensland's electricity mix—although I note that the Leader of the Opposition failed in his economic statement on Monday to note that it is also declining—and coalmining of course is a key component of Queensland's economy. In a recent public statement, the Minister for Mines and Energy stated—

Coal provides around 80% of Australia's total electricity and accounts for 32% of Australia's total CO₂ emissions.

The minister went on to state—

Australia is the world's largest exporter of coal and coal is Australia's biggest export. The coal industry's sustainability directly impacts Australia's economic prosperity, as well as the world's environment and energy supply.

These are facts that I guess many of us would hope were otherwise. There are many who would hope that we did not at present have such a reliance on coal and that it was not quite as greenhouse gas intensive, but these are the fundamental facts of the matter. It is reasonable and indeed desirable to argue that we should do much more in the areas of energy efficiency and renewables. It is also sensible to seriously explore the practicality of carbon capture and storage.

There is already a significant amount of activity towards the testing and demonstration of the feasibility of greenhouse gas storage in Queensland. The government owned corporation, CS Energy, is leading a project to demonstrate oxyfiring in a coal-fired boiler with carbon dioxide capture and storage at its Callide A Power Station. The state government has committed \$35 million to this project, which will demonstrate technology capable of reducing emissions from a typical coal-fired power station by a whopping 90 per cent. ZeroGen Pty Ltd is investigating the feasibility of an end-to-end process of coal gasification and power generation in an integrated gasification combined cycle plant, with carbon capture and geological storage.

In September 2008, Tarong Energy joined forces with CSIRO in a pilot project to capture greenhouse gases at Tarong Power Station. This project has the potential to capture 1,500 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions in a postcombustion capture process. The Queensland government has shown leadership in forming the Queensland Clean Coal Council, which comprises representatives of government and the coal industry. Since its inception in July 2007, the Clean Coal Council has already made significant commitments to a number of projects in Queensland, and a carbon storage mapping program is underway.

The ability to permanently store greenhouse gas in deep geological formations, as provided for in this bill, is not simply hypothetical; it is an ability which is already scientifically established. The Norwegian oil and gas company Statoil has been burying carbon dioxide separated from the natural gas produced from its Sleipner field since 1996. Natural gas is also effectively stored underground in the United States in more than 400 sites. The bill anticipates the hazards of permanently storing greenhouse gas streams and seeks, as far as is practical, to prevent them. Provisions in the bill allow for evaluating the feasibility of greenhouse gas stream storage including, for example, by greenhouse gas storage injection testing.

The bill contains enough checks and balances to ensure that any underground geological structures proposed for storage of a greenhouse gas stream can securely and permanently store the stream. I commend the bill to the House.