




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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ADJOURNMENT

Collinsville, Renewable Energy

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (11.58 pm): I rise to inform the House of an important development in the town of Collinsville. It is a good-news story for a town experiencing the effects of a downturn in the mining industry. However, there is a ray of sunshine on the horizon, so to speak. That ray of sunshine is in form of RATCH-Australia's announcement that the Liberal-National federal government's renewable energy target has paved the way for the company's \$100 million Collinsville solar photovoltaic project.

RATCH business development general manager, Anil Nangia, was quoted in the local newspaper, the *Bowen Independent*, as saying that the passage of the legislation for the RET ends a long period of uncertainty which required them to delay the Collinsville project. He goes on to say that this project has the potential to unlock millions of dollars of investment in the Whitsunday region, creating much needed jobs and growing the order books of local companies.

Collinsville Power Station was operating until December 2012 as an intermediate plant fuelled by locally mined clean coal with a total output of 180 megawatts. Its four 30-megawatt and 60-megawatt generator units were completely refurbished in 1998. RATCH has been exploring all options since its decommissioning and closure in 2012.

It is exciting news that the RET outcome will help RATCH to secure an offtaker for the power produced by the company's \$100 million Collinsville solar photovoltaic project. This project will be a major boost to the local economy, which has indeed been struggling. It will mean local purchasing including a wide range of products and services from fencing contractors, concreters, welders, electricians, plant and equipment operators, transport contractors and administrators. The project will have a peak construction workforce of around 40 and could employ up to three permanent staff once complete.

Collinsville is already strategically placed as a base load power station for North Queensland. The 42-megawatt solar power station will feature around 180,000 solar PV panels and supply power equivalent to the annual needs of 15,000 homes. The project is close to the old Collinsville coal-fired power station to take advantage of existing electrical infrastructure, including substations and Ergon Energy's distribution network. The project has already received development approval from Whitsunday Regional Council, which means all approvals have now been provided. RATCH is hopeful of beginning construction early next year and is already looking at ways it can expand to a second stage. If all goes well, this \$100 million investment will be a major boost to the confidence of the local community. The project will not only provide much needed jobs, it will not only power up homes and businesses, but it will also power up confidence in North Queensland.