




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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Utilities, Science and Innovation Committee, Report

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (11.05 pm): I rise tonight to speak about the estimates committee hearings of the Utilities, Science and Innovation Committee. I would like to start by thanking the chair of the committee. Although there may be some difference of opinion about fairness and the time spent, I think that he was fairly discerning in giving us a reasonable hearing and reasonable latitude during the course of that hearing. I also want to acknowledge the work of my fellow committee members. I particularly acknowledge the contributions of the various shadow ministers who came in support of the estimate hearing and supported the line of questioning of the government on the final day of estimates, the Friday.

There are a large number of things that raise concern for me as the deputy chair and also the shadow minister for housing and public works. I felt that some of the performances and responses from the ministers were disappointing, to say the least. I want to draw particular attention to the comments of the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply who took great pride in diverting his attention away from the line of questioning to tell us about the great initiative to have one million roofs with solar by 2020. We heard at length about 150 new solar power storage systems that will be trialled throughout regional Queensland. We heard about off-grid technologies. We heard about a 40-megawatt renewable auction to support private investment in jobs in renewable energy.

When we started to drill down and ask questions about what jobs this is going to create, the answers were a bit thin on the ground. We heard the minister refer to battery power cells being purchased and installed in regional Queensland to capture solar energy and yet the minister was unable to identify where these solar battery cells may come from. There was little detail about the technology. Frankly, I have to wonder just how many jobs will be created through the manufacture of battery storage systems that would predominantly come from either China or Germany. The last battery manufacturer in Australia was in Adelaide, and I think they went offshore about three years ago.

Sadly, the technology around battery storage is still fairly limited. It is still very reliant on lead batteries. I am not really sure that these systems will deliver what the minister was alluding to. I will be very curious to see what jobs come out of that. I am looking forward to a further response on that.

I also want to touch on some issues raised with the Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Science and Innovation. It was disappointing to hear her response when asked about the killing off of both the Logan and Gold Coast public and affordable housing revitalisation initiative that had been approved by the former LNP government. I thought it was ironic that the incoming government that spruiked so much about jobs and economic growth would do that. We heard the Premier speaking at the recent Labor state convention about her commitment to jobs, fairness, decency and restoring the

balance. At the same time, they were party to killing off these two significant projects, some \$1.6 billion of investment at little cost to the government. It would have resulted in some 2,000 new homes in South-East Queensland.

One of the questions that I asked, which she could not answer but has subsequently answered on notice, was the simple question: how many new dwellings will we see on the Gold Coast under the current budget and how many for Logan? It is 52 on the Gold Coast and 12 for Logan. That is hardly a government that is really delivering on public and social housing for the people of South-East Queensland. I was very disappointed with the higher level outcomes of the budget. The minister herself even admitted that most of the initiatives within the capital works program were simply a rolling program that had been put in place by the former minister, Tim Mander, the member for Everton.