Speech By

Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Renewable Energy

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.07 pm): The release of the independent Renewable Energy Expert Panel's draft report today shows my government's renewable energy ambitions for Queensland will drive new investment and jobs in our regions. The panel reports there is a potential for more than $6 billion in new investment and up to 6,700 direct and indirect jobs per annum between 2020 and 2030. As the panel reported, the reliability standard for electricity supply can be maintained, and downward pressure on wholesale electricity prices from increased renewable energy can offset costs.

I join the Minister for Energy in urging Queenslanders to respond to the draft report. Companies are already responding to my government's plans for renewable energy. Last month the minister and I announced support from ARENA for six new solar farms to be delivered by private sector proponents in Dalby, Collinsville, Kidston, Oakey and Longreach. There are two solar farms in the Collinsville area. This is another important development for Collinsville, with Glencore announcing yesterday it was seeking 200 workers for its mine.

Last week in Townsville, I met with the chief executive officer of Sun Metals Corporation. Sun Metals, a subsidiary of Korea Zinc, is investigating two additional investments at its operations in Townsville. Together, these investments represent up to $460 million of new investments at its zinc refinery. One of those investments being considered by Sun Metals is the feasibility of constructing a 100-megawatt solar farm at the refinery. Sun Metals estimate this project and an expansion of the plant would require an additional 100 jobs at the refinery. Sun Metals currently employs almost 300 staff in Townsville. This is good news for regional Queensland on top of my government's commitment to the regions.