




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2016

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumbidgee—ALP) (11.04 pm): I am happy to speak to the report by the Transportation and Utilities Committee. I always appreciate the chance to speak on the issues of appropriation. It is a good process where we can apply scrutiny to the government and also illuminate some of the government's achievements. I start by paying tribute to the Minister for Energy, Minister Mark Bailey. Certainly what we have achieved in terms of renewable energy is quite laudable. The minister said that we are in the process of turning the sunshine state into the solar state. I think that that is one of the greatest achievements so far in the Palaszczuk government.

The list of projects as part of this renewable energy push is truly impressive and I will go over a few of them. The Solar 120 project started as Solar 40, when we promised to deliver 40 megawatts of renewable energy sold off through a reverse auction. That is now Solar 120, because the price of what we can generate has actually gone down by one-third. The Clare Solar Farm will generate 100 megawatts. The Barcaldine Solar Farm will generate 25 megawatts. The Lakefield Solar Farm is proposed in Far North Queensland. The Normanton project will generate five megawatts and the Mount Emerald Wind Farm 170 megawatts, which is 15 times the current wind energy capacity in Queensland.

A government member interjected.

Mr WHITING: Indeed, it is very clean energy. That can power a city the size of Mackay and generate indirect and direct economic benefits of \$900 million throughout that region.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr WHITING: We have good news for the member: there are many other projects coming along with development approval: the Whitsunday Solar Farm, the Lilyvale Solar Farm, the Ratch Solar Farm and the Forsyth Wind Farm. We noted the Bulli Creek project, which has the potential to generate 2,000 megawatts. We also noted the QIC and AGL will be forming a consortium in an attempt to own 10 per cent of all the renewable energy capacity within Australia. I think that is most laudable, as well. Obviously we talked about how we want to establish pathways to reach 50 per cent renewable energy generation by 2030. We talked about the one million rooftops project. We are aiming for one million rooftops by 2020 and we are already halfway there. In Queensland, solar rooftops are already the equivalent of the second largest power generator in Queensland. These are really great achievements.

What I get from all of this is that we have come so far. We have come a long way in a short time. We have come a long way from the time when solar panel owners were known as champagne sippers or latte sippers; I forget which it was. We have come so far from a time when there were no large-scale projects—that is, during the three years of the LNP, which was a shame. By 2018, we will be generating 300 to 400 megawatts of solar power.

Something that I thought was really great and that was illuminated by this process was how we are making great projects that are saving Queenslanders on the cost of living. I point out the Fairer Fares package. I congratulate Minister Stirling Hinchliffe for that project, which reduces fares, children with go cards travel free on weekends, jobseekers and asylum seekers get concessions for the first time and regional Queensland fares have been frozen for 18 months. Those are great achievements that we have illuminated through this process. On electricity prices, over the two years of the Palaszczuk Labor government there has been an average increase of just 1.2 per cent compared to the 43 per cent that we saw under the LNP.

I congratulate my fellow members of the committee. In our committee, members outside of shadow ministers asked 13 questions and I congratulate them. Up until that point, in all the other committees committee members outside of shadow ministers asked just 10 questions on these issues. Our committee went all out and the opposition doubled the number of questions that they asked the ministers at the committee hearing. I congratulate them for that. Well done!

I finish by saying that the hearing was a great opportunity to talk about local projects, such as the Rothwell roundabout. That is a great example of how we can all use this process as an opportunity to highlight great projects.

(Time expired)