



Speech By  
**Julieanne Gilbert**


**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Biofuels**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (12.00 pm): Biofuels is set to be Queensland's next leading industry, and I am both pleased and proud to say that my electorate and surrounding electorates are already on the front foot thanks to the commitment of the Labor Palaszczuk government. The member for Mirani and I welcomed to our region a recent meeting of the Biofutures cabinet subcommittee, the second held in our region. From this meeting the Premier announced that the government is investigating the establishment of a biofuels industry development fund which would look to financially assist first-mover investment in the biofuels industry.

Biofuels could have a transformative effect on the Queensland economy. Companies, including Qantas and Virgin, Australia's major airlines, have shown interest in partnering with the Queensland government to develop the industry. Qantas and Virgin want to partner with the Queensland government and private enterprise to see Queensland become the headquarters for biofuels. Representatives from Qantas and Virgin attended the Biofutures meeting in Sarina reaffirming their commitment. The US Navy's Great Green Fleet has expressed interest in using Queensland made biofuels. The Great Green Fleet has been designed to test the strategic and tactical viability of biofuels.

Wilmar's Plane Creek Mill, along with its Racecourse Mill, are leading the way in biofuel technology. Plane Creek Mill, now known as Wilmar BioEthanol, is one of the three major Australian producers of ethanol products supplying over half of the domestic food and beverage and industrial market, as well as supplying the rapidly growing fuel market in Australia. Wilmar BioEthanol's Sarina distillery produces 60 million litres of ethanol per year. Ethanol produced by Wilmar from molasses produces less than half the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of petrol. Using E10 in our cars can help reduce the production of greenhouse gases that are causing climate change. In addition, lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and E10 increases the amount of oxygen used in the fuel combustion process. This means that there is a cleaner more efficient burn which reduces the amount of carbon monoxide emissions.

The potential benefits of a larger biofuels industry in Australia in the future include regional development, reduced air pollution and progress towards achieving fuel security. Wilmar's ethanol production is a renewable and sustainable process. When sugar cane is grown and harvested it gets transported to the mills by rail. In the process of producing crystallised sugar, a by-product—molasses—is produced. Molasses then becomes the feedstock to produce ethanol. Ethanol is sold in many markets, including the transport industry. During the ethanol fermentation process, a rich biological waste product is produced called dunder. The dunder is collected in dams and put back onto our fields as fertiliser for sugarcane crops.

As Queensland's economy transitions, this is one of the major medium- to long-term opportunities that could power Queensland's regional economies into the future. A potential biofuels industry could create thousands of jobs up and down the coast and support sugarcane and sorghum farmers. That is why the Palaszczuk government's Accelerated Works Program is so important to Mackay. These programs will help futureproof our region. By recognising the opportunities that will exist for our economy in the future, by providing the infrastructure that will enable Mackay to capitalise on new and diverse opportunities, our state government is building a better way, not only for Mackay but for Queensland.

This is being achieved through the fast-tracked delivery of over \$100 million worth of projects, including the Mackay region's \$28 million Vines Creek bridges project and the 42 full-time-equivalent jobs needed to deliver it. The replacement of the Vines Creek bridges is a critical project for the Mackay region. They are a vital transport artery for us, providing the sole access route to the port of Mackay. Over 15,000 vehicles per day use this route, including 1,400 heavy vehicles. Significantly, the project will ensure—

*(Time expired)*