




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 17 March 2016

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Central Queensland University, Biodiesel Project

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.42 pm): A Central Queensland University research team based in Mackay is converting waste grease and oil into biodiesel. This has attracted the attention of an international oil major. There are plans to go into commercial production sometime this year.

A dedicated team of teachers and students from the Mackay CQU campus have come up with a cheap and easy way to make renewable biodiesel by putting used cooking oil into a filter tank and then passing it through a centrifuge. The oil is then heated, cleaned and some additives put in. It takes five minutes to chemically change the cooking oil into biodiesel. It costs only 30 cents to make a litre.

Under the dedicated guidance of CQU fabrication teacher Paul Kelly, the team—the average age of students is around 16—has spent the past five years building the pilot plant to test the production of the biofuel at scale. This is a project that has caught the attention of industry and major fuel company Caltex. The hope is that the first CQU blended fuel could be in vehicles later this year. The fuel that is being produced by CQU could already be used to power diesel engines, but the team is still waiting for the final Australian fuels certification.

The fully automated plant is computer controlled and can treat and refine fatty waste products such as cooking oil. It is capable of producing more than 200 litres an hour of high-grade biodiesel. The university plans to make the biodiesel available to community organisations in the Mackay region following its certification. Since 2010 the project has gained support from regional industry, including Rio Tinto's Hail Creek Mine Community Development Fund and the Mackay Regional Council.

The project has allowed students and teachers to work closely with industry, get hands-on experience and contribute to a worthwhile project that has community and environmental benefits. VET in Schools students from Mackay, Mackay North and Sarina state high schools have worked on the project over the past five years, as well as Indigenous students from across the region and certificate II in engineering students. Many have since secured apprenticeships within industry.

I commend Paul Kelly, along with his Mackay CQU colleagues Doug Wootton and Josh Van Loenen, for initiating this pioneering project and congratulate all the Mackay students involved with bringing it to life. If these young people are an indication of our future trailblazers then Mackay's future looks very bright indeed.