




Speech By
Craig Crawford

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2017

MOTION: TULLY-MILLSTREAM HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECT

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (6.16 pm): I rise to oppose the motion. We all know that North Queensland is well suited to large-scale renewable energy projects and we are determined to unlock that potential to deliver secure, affordable, sustainable electricity to the people of Queensland. However, with so much potential available, we simply do not need to resort to projects such as the Tully-Millstream project, which do not stack up financially or environmentally.

A few years ago Stanwell brushed the cobwebs off that shelved project, but immediately reshelved it when it found that the project would destroy up to 1,000 hectares of World Heritage listed rainforest, require an investment of billions of dollars and need to be supported by unacceptably high electricity prices. The significant environmental impacts this project would involve do not seem to be a problem for the member for Hinchinbrook, and I note his recent media calls. Perhaps that is not surprising, considering the LNP's North Queensland obsession with building an expensive out-of-date coal-fired power station that would lock in high emissions and is the most costly form of new generation to build.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to unlocking the cheapest form of generation to build renewable generation in North Queensland. We are committed to transitioning to a clean energy future and to the jobs and economic prosperity associated with those projects. Our commitment to a target of 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030 has already unlocked a renewable energy boom across the state, particularly in regional Queensland with 20 renewable energy projects either committed or currently under construction, bringing with them over 2,700 jobs. However, we are not stopping there. We are committed to unlocking the hydrogeneration potential that exists across the state with a study to access the options to deploy new hydro. That study will identify hydro options that further our aim of an affordable, secure and sustainable supply of electricity.

Unfortunately, the Tully-Millstream project is very unlikely to make the cut. It has been shelved on multiple occasions, because it does not stack up. That will not change no matter how many times the member for Hinchinbrook asks or how much money his kiwi mate chips in, but other sites will. A recent ANU study found around 5,000 sites with potential for pumped hydro, many of them in Queensland. We have already committed funds to the upgrade of the Burdekin Dam and, if the feasibility stacks up, also to the Burdekin hydro project that will unleash the hydro-electric potential of our state's largest dam.

Federal policy uncertainty undermined the Burdekin hydro project in the past, but the Palaszczuk government is determined to deliver the economic and environmental benefits of the project to North Queensland. That is why this government has decided to reinvest \$100 million in dividends from Stanwell Corporation to enable building of the hydropower station.

Electricity generated from the hydropower station would deliver up to 50 megawatts of renewable energy to the grid, creating 200 jobs during construction and generating electricity to power 30,000 homes. We have also invested in the development of strategic transmission infrastructure in Northern Queensland to support a clean energy hub which will unleash the north's diverse renewable energy assets, including solar, wind and both pumped hydro and run-of-the-river hydro.

We expect the clean energy hub to link around 2,000 megawatts of renewable energy projects, including the Kidston hydro project, to support thousands of jobs and strengthen and diversify the north's energy supply. Powerlink kickstarted this project just last week with the release of an expression of interest process which will provide market intelligence about the financially viable projects which could be linked to this infrastructure to provide power for North Queensland.

We have not stopped there. Last week we also kicked off our Renewables 400 reverse auction which will support a diverse mix of large scale renewable energy generation and storage projects. This again has the potential to support viable hydro projects.

With all these actions underway to tap the renewable energy potential of the north, we just do not need to commit to an expensive, damaging, shelved project which will destroy World Heritage Listed rainforest and require the commitment of billions of dollars in public funds. The Palaszczuk government will unleash the hydro potential of North Queensland but not with the Tully-Millstream project.