




Speech By
Hon. Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2017

MOTION: TULLY-MILLSTREAM HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECT

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (6.05 pm): I rise to speak against the motion moved by the member for Dalrymple. The Palaszczuk government, as members would be aware from the budget that I handed down in June, has made some real inroads into building infrastructure in this state. The member for Dalrymple talks about building dams and power stations. I think he needs to have a close look at some of the projects we have completed, not only in this budget but also in the last three years, where we have set tasks for our GOCs with energy and water to get on with the job and continue to build our state.

We are very clearly committed to a 50 per cent renewables target by 2030, which we believe will be achieved through a diverse mix of renewable generation and storage, including hydro-electric generation. We are committed to the development of North Queensland's energy assets for the benefit of North Queensland. That is why we have committed in our Powering Queensland Plan a specific component which deals with North Queensland. That is progressing the Burdekin hydro project. That is also a commitment to a study into options for further developing Queensland's hydro-electric capacity.

However, whatever happens needs to stack up financially and environmentally. Unfortunately, investigations of the Tully-Millstream project show that it does not stack up either financially or environmentally. It falls into the same category as the LNP's confused solar energy policy. That is, of course, the extensive impractical development of a new coal-fired power station. Like the LNP's imaginary coal-fired power station, the Tully-Millstream project is going to cost billions of dollars to build and need high power prices to make it viable. We know the LNP's proposal around a HELE coal-fired power station would take seven years to build and would produce energy at about seven times the cost that it would to produce energy via renewables. It is simply not a bankable project.

In recent times the member for Hinchinbrook has decided to double down on this confusion. He was calling for a federally funded feasibility study for the Tully-Millstream project. Despite numerous previous feasibility studies all showing the project to be undesirable and unfeasible, the member for Hinchinbrook thinks the next one will just be the one that cracks it.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr PITT: A 2012 study into Tully-Millstream found it would cost between \$3 billion and \$4.2 billion to build and it would not be viable without power prices of more than \$200 per megawatt hour. He has not convinced his federal colleagues. Barnaby Joyce, Warren Entsch and the member for Hinchinbrook were meant to do a press conference last week. This was cancelled shortly after being alerted. This confused stand was there for all to see. The member for Hinchinbrook went onto ABC Far North.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr PITT: It was essentially a non-announcement announcement—a 'Claytons' announcement: the announcement you are having when you are not having an announcement. Everyone knew what the announcement was, but they said, 'We are going to reschedule it, we hope, for announcement later on.'

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr PITT: I was driving along in my car and I could hear Kier Shorey probing the member for Hinchinbrook and I said, 'Ask him a question! Ask him a question!' He said the reason Barnaby Joyce could not come was Fiona Nash's latest citizenship scandal. I was saying, 'Kier, please ask the question of the member for Hinchinbrook: why is it a different set of rules'—

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Treasurer. I apologise for interrupting. Member for Hinchinbrook, I find your comments out of order.

Mr Cripps: You don't think he is addressing those comments towards me, Mr Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER: I think you are trying to talk over the top of the minister.

Mr Cripps: He mentioned me half a dozen times.

Mr SPEAKER: You are a big boy. We will move on. You understand the message, member for Hinchinbrook.

Mr PITT: I was really rhetorically asking the question, 'Why is Senator Canavan different from Fiona Nash or Barnaby Joyce?' when Kier Shorey asked why there was a different stance. The member for Hinchinbrook said that it was right for the Deputy Prime Minister and Senator Nash to stay in cabinet while Matt Canavan had to resign because—wait for it—Senator Canavan held Italian citizenship while Barnaby Joyce and Senator Nash respectively held New Zealand and British citizenship. Apparently, whether you remain in cabinet is dependent on what country you may or may not have dual citizenship of, which became very confusing.

We know that the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric scheme was proposed 20 years ago. We know that for many reasons it was never progressed, mainly because of both economic and particularly environmental concerns with the proposed flooding of over 1,000 'hectares', for the notice of the member for Burleigh, of a World Heritage area. Hydro-electric generation is something that our government supports, but we have already announced what we are looking to do on the Burdekin Falls Dam. We believe that the Powering North Queensland Plan is a considerable component of where we need to go with our future energy mix. We appreciate the sentiment behind tonight's motion, but we do not support it and we do not support yet another feasibility study into the Tully-Millstream proposal. I urge all members of the House to not support the motion.