



Speech By  
**Glenn Butcher**


**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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Record of Proceedings, 24 October 2017

**MOTION**

**Renewable Energy Target**

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (6.15 pm): Tonight I rise to speak against the LNP's motion which could take us back to the old days of a complete freeze on renewables and 43 per cent hikes inflicted on all of Queensland. The Palaszczuk government is proud to have kick-started the renewable energy boom in Queensland which is creating thousands of jobs, mainly in regional Queensland. This is of course after not one large-scale renewable energy project was built under the anti-renewable LNP in its last term. In fact, those opposite were not only not committed to growing the industry; they did nothing while Queensland lost 1,300 renewable energy sector jobs during their time in office. In total, the number of people employed in the solar PV industry contracted by 41 per cent from 2011 to 2015.

In stark contrast, the Palaszczuk government has thrown out the welcome mat to large-scale renewable energy investors in Queensland, providing investment certainty with our commitment to 50 per cent renewables by 2030, creating Queensland's renewable energy revolution. Right now there are 18 large-scale renewable energy projects under construction, with a further four projects soon to start. No other state has more renewable projects under development than what we are seeing here in Queensland right now. Not only will these projects provide a cleaner and more diverse mix of energy for Queensland; they are delivering important benefits to the state economy, particularly in regional areas. For example, we expect these projects will boost investment by \$3.7 billion and also employ 3,000 workers during the construction phase of these wonderful projects. Of course these are just direct economic benefits. There will be substantial indirect economic benefits for the local townships where these projects are located.

Our commitment to a 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030 as part of the Powering Queensland Plan followed a significant body of work undertaken by an independent expert panel which found that achieving the target would deliver significant economic benefits to the Queensland economy. This includes \$6.7 billion of new investment and a net average increase in employment of up to 6,700 jobs per year on average between 2020 and 2030. Importantly, the panel also found that Queensland would continue to enjoy electricity supply under that target while electricity sector emissions would be 25 per cent to 31 per cent lower than 2016 levels. We have the most robust energy system in the nation and we are well prepared to undertake this measured transition.

Let me be clear: the expert panel's modelling projected that a 50 per cent renewable energy target would broadly have a cost-neutral impact on electricity consumers—as set out in detail in their report—not a \$200 increase as the opposition is saying. This modelling is also consistent with the modelling of the Finkel review and the fact that additional supply from our renewable power plants will help put downward pressure on wholesale prices. The modelling referred to in the LNP's motion is completely irrelevant. It does not even relate to the scheme that federal Labor is proposing. The fact that the opposition has attempted to compare the two sets of modelling shows that it does not understand energy policy on the most basic level.

The Palaszczuk government has a clear vision and a comprehensive plan. Affordability will always remain front and centre. It is important to understand that renewables do not just benefit the environment and jobs growth in the regions; they also benefit everyone's power bills. Renewables are the cheapest and quickest form of new power generation to build, not coal-fired power stations.

Under our \$300 million Affordable Energy Plan, we are also providing an asset owner dividend of \$50 a year off every household bill, annual discounts for regional Ergon customers of \$75 per household and \$120 for businesses that take up the direct payment option, and \$300 to purchase an energy-efficient fridge, air conditioner, or washing machine. Those are only a few of the initiatives that we are introducing, yet all the member for Clayfield can offer to the people of Queensland is an uncosted idea of a new coal-fired power station that would end up costing Queensland taxpayers billions of dollars and which has been criticised by independent industry and energy experts alike.