




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2017

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Bio Processing Australia

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (12.05 pm): Last Friday was an exciting day in Mackay and for the wider Mackay region. I gathered with the member for Mirani, Jim Pearce; the Treasurer; John Lockhart, the CEO of Bio Processing Australia; and Phil Deguara on Phil's Eton farm for an announcement that will bring the region of Mackay into a new realm of diversity in the area of biofuels and bioprocessing of crops. The Palaszczuk government has granted \$8.64 million assistance for Mackay's \$50 million biorefinery to help accelerate the project's development and construction. The initiative could create up to 115 jobs and will position the wider Mackay region as an emerging bioindustrial hub. We already have the Plane Creek Mill biofuels ethanol plant at Sarina.

The Bio Processing Australia facility is proposed to be located at one of the Mackay region's sugar mills and will deliver up to 70 construction jobs and 50 skilled operational jobs and attract significant investment and further jobs in the region. Mackay is looking for skilled jobs and this project and operation will require biochemists, electricians, fitters, plant operators, truck drivers and labourers. This is a game-changing concept for Mackay and exactly the type of project that we have been targeting to generate jobs and economic activity in Mackay. BPA complements the Mackay region's existing industries and technical expertise and I am very excited by the investment prospects of this biorefinery, with construction scheduled for early next year.

BPA's planned commercial scale facility will have the capacity to annually produce up to 26,000 tonnes of soy meal, 2,000 tonnes of yeast product for the animal feed market and 15 megalitres of biodiesel suitable for heavy transport industries. The Palaszczuk government has quickly provided a decision at the early stage of BPA's planning so that the company has the financial backing of the government to support its needs and prioritise the establishment of a biofuel refinery in Queensland. The member for Mirani and I were not prepared to stand by and see this invaluable project go offshore to somewhere like Singapore or Malaysia, which BPA had been considering. The intellectual property of this industry was actively being sought by overseas ventures. The government has put sensible commercial conditions on the funding to ensure it delivers and we will be releasing the funding in stages on the completion of agreed construction milestones. This \$8.64 million in funding will come from the \$130 million Jobs and Regional Growth Fund, a fund that helps facilitate private sector projects that will create employment and economic growth opportunities in the regions like Mackay.

By supporting this project, the Palaszczuk government is directly investing in the economic diversification of Mackay's economy to increase local employment and deliver improved environmental outcomes for Queensland. This is another step towards Labor's vision for a \$1 billion sustainable, export orientated, industrial biotechnology and bioproducts sector, creating the high-skill jobs of the future. The facility is expected to allow BPA to expand its exports of its high-value products to Asian and other international markets. This is a massive win for my region.

The Palaszczuk Labor government is continually making upgrades at the Mackay bulk port so that other industries will be attracted to the Mackay region. The Mackay region is bursting with resources. BPA's facility will be comprised of three elements. There will be a yeast-producing plant that will produce 2,000 tonnes per annum of high-value yeast products, primarily for Asian animal feed consumers, and an oilseed crushing plant that will produce 30,000 tonnes per annum of non-food grade vegetable oil. Co-products such as soy and sunflower meal are to be directed at Queensland based pastoral consumers. There will be a 15 megalitre per annum biodiesel plant.

(Time expired)