



Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Solar Energy

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.49 am): I am pleased to report to the House that clean energy jobs are coming to Gladstone. Last month with the member for Gladstone I was pleased to announce our preferred tenderer to transform 1,250 hectares of under-utilised state owned land in the Gladstone state development area at Aldoga into one of the largest solar farms in the Southern Hemisphere. Under that deal, Acciona Energy will develop, finance, construct and operate a \$500 million energy project through a 30-year lease with the Queensland government. This project will support up to 240 construction jobs and 10 ongoing jobs. When complete, this 265-megawatt project will generate enough power for up to 122,000 homes. That is around five times the number of households in Gladstone.

The Aldoga solar project will not only harvest the sun's energy and feed it into the state electricity grid but also support local businesses and local jobs. As part of the agreement for lease, Acciona Energy will establish a community benefit fund to provide grants to local community organisations. Between \$50,000 and \$120,000 per year will be put into the fund, representing between \$1.5 million to \$3.6 million over the 30-year lease. This will go to local clubs, associations and community groups in the region.

Five large-scale solar projects have begun operating in Queensland in the last 18 months, bringing the total operational capacity of renewable energy in Queensland to more than 780 megawatts. Another 23 large-scale projects totalling 2,200 megawatts are currently financially committed or under construction, creating almost 3,600 jobs during construction and boosting investment by up to \$4.2 billion.

We expect construction on the Aldoga solar project to commence next year, with electricity generation beginning in 2020. This is what happens when there is a government that provides certainty in energy policy. Our target is to reach 50 per cent renewable energy in this state by 2030. That target is driving a pipeline of private sector investment. That target is supporting jobs in regional Queensland where they are needed.

What do we get from the Turnbull government? We get total policy confusion. They have expressed their preference that we abandon our renewable energy target in favour of a national scheme. We will not turn away from \$4 billion in renewable construction jobs and energy capacity for our state. The Leader of the Opposition should pick up the phone and tell the federal energy minister, who also happens to be the minister for the Great Barrier Reef, to back renewables and to back renewable energy jobs in Queensland.