



Speech By  
**Julianne Gilbert**


**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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Record of Proceedings, 6 March 2018

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Mackay Electorate, Biomanufacturing**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.51 pm): I am very pleased to report to the House that Mackay's QUT laboratory situated at Racecourse Mill will be developing the pilot scheme for renewable jet fuel and diesel made from sugarcane waste. The Labor Palaszczuk government is supporting US company Mercurius to bring their biorefinery technology to Queensland. This is fantastic news for Mackay and for the sugarcane industry of our regions. Mercurius plans to build a pilot plant to test different elements of the biomanufacturing process across Mackay and Gladstone. They are going to build a demonstration plant in Gladstone. The Palaszczuk government understands the importance of bringing new industries into the regions to futureproof our economy. New industries add to the livability of regions like mine with new career paths for school leavers and mature age workers wanting to transition into a different industry.

Regions like Mackay that are service centres to the coal industry need to have many economic strings to their bow to buffer them from the rise and fall of coal prices. Mercurius will do this for our region. Mercurius is also on the lookout for five other sites across Queensland to set up processing plants once the demonstration projects are complete. This is expected to attract \$11 million in investment and will continue to provide jobs across regional Queensland. This process will also value add to our already well-established sugarcane industry which my region has been economically reliant on for many generations.

Mercurius Biorefining is a Washington state based company. They have a patented technology to use bagasse, a sugarcane waste matter left after the crushing process of cane. They can also use biomass materials like wood offcuts in their ReACH technology. The fuels manufactured using the ReACH technology will be able to directly substitute minerals based fuels for jet engine fuel and diesel, and they also plan to expand into marine fuel. The Palaszczuk government has its eye on the future of Queensland's economy and jobs. The biorefinery project is another step towards achieving Queensland's vision for a \$1 billion sustainable, export orientated biotechnology and bioproducts future.

The Mercurius company was attracted to Queensland through the Biofutures Acceleration Program's expression of interest. It is only a government with vision which puts out expressions of interest such as this. I am proud to be a member of a government that is leading Australia's biofutures revolution. The Palaszczuk government has a 10-year road map and an action plan for biofutures. The pilot plan and the development of the fuels industry is expected to speed up the manufacturing industry of bioproducts such as bioplastics. Mercurius CEO Karl Seck was recently in Mackay inspecting the QUT Racecourse Mill laboratory. He told me that he is excited about his company's future in biofuels manufacturing in regional Queensland. He said that regional Queensland has all the resources and level of expertise that will enable his business to be successful. Regional Queensland has a favourable business climate, an extensive agricultural industry and world-class universities so we can see why he

has chosen my region to set up. With the combination of Queensland's agricultural resources and Mercurius's ReACH technology, the company expects that the production cost of biofuels will be reduced which will make them very competitive.

Before the Palaszczuk government was first elected in 2015, the economy and employment in regional Queensland was heading in the wrong direction. The former LNP government had no plans when the heat came off the mining industry. They just sat back and watched No. 1 William Street be built without any thought for the regions. Thanks to the Palaszczuk government we have in Queensland a progressive government giving back to the business sector. The unemployment rate in my electorate is now down to 4.4 per cent.

*(Time expired)*