




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

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**STATE DEVELOPMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND AGRICULTURAL
INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (3.49 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee report No. 25 titled *Consideration of the Auditor-General's Report 9: 2018-19—Energy: 2017-18 results of financial audits* tabled 28 March 2019.

This report on our energy entities is one that we get annually from the Queensland Audit Office. I start by noting that the QAO report rightly touched on the Powering Queensland Plan. I always like to talk about the Powering Queensland Plan because it is a \$2 billion integrated energy plan for our state. It will ensure we have an affordable, secure and sustainable energy supply for our state. The plan will support the transition to a cleaner energy sector, create new investment and jobs and guide the state through the challenges that are facing Australia's energy market.

One part of the plan I am particularly excited about is the establishment of CleanCo. The third state owned generator is now up and running. This is a landmark Queensland company that will one day have a fleet of clean energy generators throughout Queensland generating clean energy for the whole nation. It is ours. It belongs to all of us.

As part of the Powering Queensland Plan we have set a target for one million solar rooftops, or 3,000 megawatts of solar photovoltaic from rooftops, in Queensland by 2020. As I have said previously in the House, we are over halfway there. We have over 592,000 rooftops with solar. Queensland has the highest number of installations in Australia. The biggest power station in Queensland is our solar rooftops. They are generating over 2,000 megawatts of solar PV capacity.

Under our plan, in the past two years 18 large-scale renewable energy projects have commenced operations in Queensland, bringing more than 17 megawatts into the national grid. There are another 14 large-scale projects worth around \$2.8 billion under construction in regional Queensland. I pay tribute to the minister responsible in the previous government, the now Minister for Main Roads, and also the current Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy for their great work in this field. It is highlighted in this report that the Powering Queensland Plan is delivering affordable energy to Queenslanders.

The Queensland Competition Authority has found that power prices have continued to remain stable or fall for four consecutive quarters. There has been a 1.3 per cent decrease in power prices for residents in regional Queensland. We are currently delivering two annual rebates worth \$50 to each of those households in Queensland. That is something that the Morrison government could only dream about.

There are also \$13 million worth of rebates for energy-efficient appliances and interest-free loans for solar panels. We can do this because we own the assets—the generators, the distributors. The QAO highlights that this a massive multibillion dollar industry. In Queensland the industry has: \$3.7 billion in

generation assets; \$7.9 billion in transmission assets; a whopping \$23.4 billion in distribution assets, including 200,000 kilometres of powerlines; racks up \$1.6 billion in debt servicing costs; \$1.5 billion in fuel, raw materials and service costs each year; 3.94 million customers; and employs 9,000 Queenslanders. We must never forget that it is a huge employer. I acknowledge the member for Kurwongbah who represents that industry quite ably in this place.

This industry returned \$1.1 billion to Queensland. That includes half a billion dollars paid through Energy Queensland to regional customers to make their electricity cheaper. That is a very good statistic. Let us not forget that that includes nearly \$200 million in rebates and concessions for Queenslanders. I commend this report to the House.