



Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

Record of Proceedings, 9 September 2020

MOTION

Energy Generation

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.16 pm): I rise to oppose the motion moved by the member for Hill and also to correct the record in relation to statements just made by my learned colleague and good friend the member for Hinchinbrook, Mr Dametto. In the electorate of Mount Ommaney—in my household and in many other households in my community—we have over 8,000 people who have solar on their rooftops. Most of them are not rich people. Most of them have made a choice that that is something they wanted to do.

They wanted to invest in their future and the future of Queensland, and they have made the decision to put solar on their rooftops. To say that only rich people can afford solar is not accurate. It is thanks to the investment of Labor governments over many successive years that solar has come down in price so much that it is now possible for many different families, groups and businesses right across Queensland to afford to put solar and other kinds of renewables into their businesses and into their households. That is something I am really proud of.

Under this Palaszczuk Labor government, we have set the goal of 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030. This allows Queensland to continue achieving our energy trifecta—affordability, reliability and a smooth transition to renewables. We are tracking well to meet this goal. We are currently sitting at around 20 per cent after five years of continued investment by our government and support for the renewables industry.

We are doing this because, as the QCA has recognised in their pricing determinations, having a measured increase in renewable energy generation puts downward pressure on wholesale electricity prices. Over the past three years, Queenslanders know that power prices have decreased. In regional Queensland a household would have saved \$600 and a small business \$1,000. Our policies are working to drive down prices, unlike those opposite whose policies resulted in Queensland power bills going up 43 per cent.

Over the past five years under the Palaszczuk government 41 projects have been launched. This represents a \$7.8 billion investment in 7,900 megawatts of new generation, supporting more than 6,500 jobs for regional Queensland. One of the key planks of our renewable transition was the establishment of CleanCo. CleanCo has assets that employ Queenslanders from Barron Gorge in the far north to Swanbank in the south-east. Combined, CleanCo's current assets have a combined generating capacity of 1,120 megawatts.

In addition, they have a mandate for 1,000 megawatts of new renewable generation by 2025. They are well underway to achieving this mandate. Since their inception, CleanCo has supported two additional large-scale renewable energy projects. The first of those is Neoen's Western Downs Green Power Hub project. CleanCo has committed to purchasing 320 megawatts of new renewable energy generated by this project, which is approximately 22 kilometres south-east of Chinchilla. The purchase

agreement by CleanCo gave this project the support it required to get off the ground. The project, which will include Australia's largest solar farm, is expected to generate up to 400 jobs and 400 megawatts of new renewable energy for Queensland. These jobs are more crucial than ever in regional Queensland in these tough economic times. Construction was to commence in July 2020 and generation is scheduled for the first quarter of 2022.

The second project is the MacIntyre Wind Farm. This is another project that is getting off the ground in the Southern Downs region. It is a renewable energy powerhouse. The MacIntyre Wind Farm Precinct is being delivered through a partnership between CleanCo and Acciona. CleanCo will build, own and operate its own wind farm of 18 turbines and invest in a further 400 megawatts through a power purchase agreement resulting from the Queensland government's Renewables 400 initiative. Through these investments CleanCo will deliver up to 500 megawatts of new renewable energy for Queensland. Early works are expected to commence shortly, with construction to commence mid-2021. The entire project in the MacIntyre precinct will be operational by 2024.

The good news does not stop there. On Monday the Treasurer's budget update announced an additional \$500 million to foster more renewable energy projects and jobs. CleanCo will be eligible to apply for this fund to get even more Queenslanders working in renewable energy. Let's compare our record to that of the LNP. Under those opposite there was a renewable blackout. There was not one large-scale renewable project built in this state. For five years there was no progress towards our renewable energy target. We have the balance right, and I urge all members to vote against this motion.