



Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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FOREST WIND FARM DEVELOPMENT BILL

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (12.41 pm): I rise to support the Forest Wind Farm Development Bill, which provides a pathway for Forest Wind Holdings to obtain tenure to access, occupy, develop and manage the land and limit the construction and operation to three state forests for a proposed renewable energy project for Queensland. The Palaszczuk government's plan to unite and recover for Queensland is all about supporting jobs and infrastructure projects to stimulate our economy. This project has the potential of creating around 440 jobs during construction over a three-year period and up to 50 full-time jobs once it is up and running. This will be a much welcomed project for the Wide Bay-Burnett community.

CleanSight Pty Ltd, a joint venture partner of Forest Wind Holdings, is a Queensland based company in the low-carbon energy sector seeking to significantly contribute to Queensland's transition to a renewable energy future. The fully implemented wind farm will generate approximately 1,200 megawatts of renewable energy from up to 226 wind turbines in the Toolara, Tuan and Neerdie state forests. In turn, this will increase Queensland's large-scale renewable energy capacity by 40 per cent, producing enough clean energy to supply one in four Queensland homes.

The proposed project area is also the subject of a current plantation licence held by HQPlantations, which commenced in 2010 and continues for a 99-year period. I would like to thank HQPlantations for the tour of their forestry site a few years ago. I know that my department and HQPlantations have a strong engagement on ensuring ongoing forestry production requirements. HQPlantations, as one of the largest private timber plantation companies in Australia, continues its strong local engagement on jobs and production. The forestry requirements have been well considered, as under the current legislative framework the Forestry Act 1959 prohibits this development of inconsistent and incompatible uses, including the grant of tenure for projects of this kind. This bill establishes the legislative framework for the development to coexist with this plantation licence and to otherwise be undertaken in the state forests through exempting the project from certain provisions of the Forestry Act and the Land Act 1994.

As a part of this project there are fire risk management arrangements, and a range of operational matters will need to be negotiated and finalised between HQP and Forest Wind Holdings should this bill be passed. Those negotiations are progressing well with HQP and Forest Wind agreeing to a set of principles, and both will be looking towards an agreed fire management plan for the area.

Timber Queensland have provided in-principle support of the bill as a result of commitments made by Forest Wind regarding a 'no net loss' in forestry production through the provision of land offsets and measures to appropriately manage fire hazards and operational impacts. I am advised Forest Wind have provided community consultation to date, including consulting the Butchella people and Kabi Kabi First Nation people, who will benefit from expected job opportunities; holding information sessions at three locations; and providing information through newsletters and its website.

Gympie Regional Council have indicated their support for the bill, noting the potential investment in the region from the \$2 billion project, including improved local jobs outcomes and the potential tourism opportunities in terms of renewable energy tours. What makes this bill stand up is the many jobs and

economic benefits it entails, with no costs incurred; all costs associated with due diligence and subsequent delivery of the project will be met by Forest Wind. Alternative tenure options were considered under the current legislative framework and were deemed either insufficient on their own to permit the development or did not allow the project to coexist with the plantation licence, presenting limitations for progressing a tenure framework satisfactory to all parties.

Without the House passing this bill, the development will not be able to proceed. This framework is in addition to a suite of project documents which will provide for the project to occur in stages and outline each party's obligations in respect of the development and long-term occupation and use of parts of the state forests. The project detailed in this bill delivers on the government's plan to unite and recover for Queensland jobs and should be passed. I commend the bill to the House.