



Speech By  
**Robbie Katter**


**MEMBER FOR TRAEGER**

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## MOTION

### Energy Generation

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (5.21 pm): I would like to read the motion again because I think it is important to get the wording right and to get the point across. The motion states—

1. That this House acknowledges the vital role cheap coal-fired power plays in supporting the jobs of millions of Queenslanders now and for the next 50 years; and
2. That this House commits to providing Queenslanders with the cheapest electricity possible by ceasing costly renewable power mandates, subsidies and investment programs available to inefficient wind and solar generation to ensure coal and renewables compete on a level playing field.

I would like to pull that motion apart a bit and explain to the House why we moved this motion. We used wind and solar as examples there, but there are some excellent renewable projects. My father was a minister in this House when one of the first solar farms was built in Queensland up on Thursday Island. When we were kids we experimented at home with solar panels and a pump down the tank down the back. They play a good role in the grazing industry. They have a role to play, but this motion is about giving people clear visibility as to the costs of these things. If people like having environmental values that is a really honourable thing, but there is a cost associated with it.

Let's be clear about the cost that imposes on people and how it is distributed. Throughout regional Queensland a portion of our air-conditioning bills contributes to subsidies. There are all different sorts of subsidies that apply in all sorts of different ways to renewable energy. Whether that is through rooftop solar or larger renewable projects, the fact is that they are used for that. Coming up to this election a lot of the voting public are looking at this and saying, 'What's going on here?' They will be told, 'Renewables are cost-effective. They compete with coal now, so we should be building more of them.' Everyone thinks that sounds good, but do they compete on a level playing field with coal? If they do not, then you need to answer the people and say, 'Perhaps some of that cost is impacting on your power bill.' That is then clearly a choice for them to make with their eyes wide open.

Do not say, 'Actually, it's just as cheap, so that's why we're pumping all of this money into it and that's why we won't build another coal-fired power station. We're still doing all this other stuff because it's just as cheap.' Is it? Is it as cheap? If it is as you say, then it should not need the subsidies. It should stand on its own two feet. I am sure there are areas in the market where it can, and that is great. What we would like to do is shine some clarity on this issue. Let's not walk away from the fact that it is firmly established out there—you can kid yourselves in the House here—in the regions, more to the point. In North Queensland they are asking, 'When did people start hating coal? When did this all start happening?' It happened with the Carmichael mine, and it all turned political and everyone said, 'Let's just start hating on coal.'

Let me tell you a little bit about coal, because it plays an important part in our economy and I think it will in the future: \$3.8 billion in wages; \$4.4 billion in royalties last year; 0.1 per cent of Queensland's land mass; in 2018-19, \$52.5 billion gross regional product; over the whole of Queensland it was 15 per cent of the total GDP; 11 per cent of employment. They are pretty big

numbers, and bear in mind the impact of coronavirus on the hospitality and tourism sectors. Agriculture and mining are a fundamental part of our economy, and I can tell you that they have not been doing too well out there. They feel like the government has been their enemy for so many years. Go out there and try and start a coalmine or water project from scratch—it is not very easy.

We are trying to say, 'Let these things run on their own steam.' A coal-fired power station relies on the support of the people, and it will not have the support of the people if you keep muddying the waters and saying, 'Actually, it costs the same so we're going to build all this.' Does it cost the same? That is the question for this House to answer, because it will impact on the way this matter is discussed by the public. This government needs to give people out there in voter land a clear decision on whether you are for coal or you are not. If you are happy to produce coal in this state you will not mind those subsidies being dropped and seeing it run on its own steam. That is a question for voters, and people here should be judged on where they stand on coal in Queensland.