




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

Record of Proceedings, 25 May 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Economy

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (9.47 am): Queensland is leading Australia's economic recovery from COVID-19. Queensland's economic growth is the fastest in the nation. State final demand grew by 2.4 per cent over 2020, double that of Western Australia. Queensland has had the largest employment growth—up 54,900 or 2.1 per cent—of any state or territory since March 2020. Queensland's household consumption increased by 2.6 per cent over 2020, while across Australia household consumption fell by 2.7 per cent. State and local government investment in Queensland grew by six per cent in 2020 but, sadly, over the same period federal government investment in Queensland fell by 10.8 per cent.

The federal government's lack of interest in backing Queensland and backing Queensland jobs is, put simply, appalling and it is on show every single week. For example, our government is backing renewable projects across the length and breadth of this state: projects that support jobs, that reduce electricity prices and that help us grow industries like manufacturing. They are projects like Genex's pumped hydro at Kidston and Neoen's Kaban wind farm and battery project on the Atherton Tablelands.

The Palaszczuk Labor government is investing \$40 million to upgrade transmission lines for the Kaban wind farm, creating 250 jobs. We are a government that understands renewable energy and supports renewable energy jobs. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the Morrison LNP government. Federal Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia, Keith Pitt, decided to use his veto power to stop Kaban getting access to a loan from NAIF which, for Queensland, has become the 'no actual infrastructure fund'. This federal LNP minister, who bizarrely is a Queenslander, attempted to justify his decision by saying he was not convinced Kaban would lower prices. It is hard to know what he wants. It is in a proven renewable energy zone. The Northern Queensland Renewable Energy Zone includes some of Queensland's best renewable resources, spanning from Far North Queensland north of Cairns, down to areas around Mackay and as far west as Barcaldine. Just up the road, the Mount Emerald Wind Farm powers Queensland homes every day.

Our investment in upgrading the existing transmission line means Kaban is plugged into the grid. Through our publicly owned generator CleanCo, Kaban already has a customer that will buy the power that it produces. The project included approval for a 100-megawatt battery to make its generation dispatchable. Put simply, this is nothing short of economic renewable energy and jobs vandalism by the federal LNP. In a car crash interview on Sky News, this Queensland based federal minister, Keith Pitt, who has an engineering degree, could not bring himself to admit that a battery attached to a wind farm provides reliable, affordable power for the grid.

Queenslanders have a premier and a state Labor government that cares about jobs—a government that invests in affordable renewable energy produced in conjunction with our publicly owned power companies. What Queenslanders deserve is a federal government that delivers the same level of respect to Queenslanders. Instead, we have one that sacrifices Queensland jobs, Queensland infrastructure and Queensland investment for their own base political purposes.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I said this to the minister the other day: no relation.