




Speech By  
**Colin Boyce**

**MEMBER FOR CALLIDE**

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**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (5.55 pm): I rise to deliver my address-in-reply speech. I take the opportunity to congratulate every member of parliament on their re-election to the 57th Parliament. I remind all of my parliamentary colleagues that we are all here for the same reason—to represent the people and to make decisions in the best interests of the people. We must be rational, particular and concise and take into account the ramifications of the decisions we make.

I quote Robert Louis Stevenson: 'Politics is perhaps the only profession for which no preparation is thought necessary.' We should all dwell on that thought for a while, I think. I am an Australian and I reaffirm my allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Commonwealth of Australia. To sit in the people's house of the 57th Parliament of Queensland is an honour and a responsibility that I take very seriously.

The electorate of Callide has chosen me as its elected representative—an honour bestowed on only a few. I most humbly thank them for putting their trust in me. To the people, I say this: having had the experiences of my first term in parliament, the way is often not clear, the process is often complicated and, in many cases, one is left contemplating what is the best decision to make. With this in mind, I draw inspiration from people like the Venerable Fulton Sheen, who said—

Moral principles do not depend on a majority vote. Wrong is wrong, even if everybody is wrong. Right is right, even if nobody is right.

I hold to this principle. The decisions I have made have at times not been easy; however, they have always been in the best interests of the people I serve.

I would like to take the opportunity to make mention of all the people who gave their time to set up and man all the polling booths and pre-poll booths in the Callide electorate. I extend my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to them. Being elected depends on volunteers. Their efforts go largely unrecognised but they are crucial. I would like to make special mention and recognise my Callide office staff—Leesa, Kellie and Anne—for their diligence and support. Without them, the Callide office would not function. To my long-suffering wife, Terri, thank you for your never-ending support and patience.

There have been some anomalies in the postal voting system that in my opinion need to be addressed. I fielded many complaints from people all over the electorate who did not receive their postal votes on time or in some cases at all. It is clear that the postal system does not work as efficiently as it should. I had one lady ring me to tell me that her postal vote arrived in the mail on 16 November. We witnessed an example where, had as few as five people voted differently, the election result would have changed, so it is most important that our voting system works efficiently and properly.

My electorate of Callide covers an extensive area of Central Queensland which is dominated by the agriculture, mining and resources, and energy generation industries. There are obviously many small businesses that service these major sectors, and many of them are mum-and-dad owner-operators. I have travelled some 270,000 kilometres around the electorate, including driving to Brisbane for parliament, since I became the LNP candidate for Callide in July 2017 and up until the October 2020 state election.

The issues that concern the people of the electorate are huge, varied and unfortunately do not concern the day-to-day lives of many Queenslanders, but they should. The Paradise Dam issue, water security, water pricing and water infrastructure are front and centre of the many issues that I deal with. The Bundaberg area produces 25 per cent of Australia's fresh food produce. There have been hundreds of millions of dollars of agricultural investment which has been put at risk due to some seriously bad decisions made by the Queensland government. Those opposite are going to rue the day they let 100,000 megalitres of water go out to sea in the middle of a drought.

Paradise Dam will be out of water in the coming weeks if there are no significant inflows into the dam reservoir. The government will learn very quickly that you cannot make it rain. The agricultural area of Bundaberg is facing the prospect of little or no water allocations for the foreseeable future. Some people are contemplating the possible likelihood of financial ruin. The economic future of business is under question and business strategy is that of damage control, all because of an incompetent Labor government that has presided over the biggest infrastructure failure in Australia's history since day one. The construction was questionable, its management was questionable and the deconstruction was questionable. I believe it is the Labor Party's Machiavellian holy maxim that some men should be ruined for the good of others. It will be interesting to see the imminent legal class action unfold and how the government will defend its actions.

In the recent state election the member for Bundaberg, the honourable Tom Smith, campaigned on providing jobs for the people of Bundaberg. There are now hundreds of jobs at risk because there is no water in Paradise Dam. What I would like to know is the alternative job prospects he has in mind for the people of Bundaberg and how he might deliver them.

The 56th Parliament saw the introduction of reef legislation, which will regulate agriculture up and down the inland coast of Queensland. It is my opinion that the legislation is based on flawed, manipulated, untested and unproven science. It is ideologically driven politics from the environmental left. Dr Hardisty from the James Cook University in Townsville clearly stated in the federal Senate inquiry that they had never linked farming practices to reef water quality, yet we see a complete contradiction in the 2017 reef consensus statement where disproportionate blame is laid at the feet of agriculture for the perceived demise of the Great Barrier Reef.

In the recent budget delivered before Christmas I was amazed to find a document in the Service Delivery Statements from the environment office dedicated to how the government might prosecute people for noncompliance, yet there is nothing explaining how the government might help farmers and graziers navigate reef legislation and help them become compliant. I have attended several best management sessions prepared by the environment office recently. I was told by the office that I would not be able to attend these meetings as I did not meet their protocol. Can you believe that, Madam Speaker? I am in my own right a farmer and grazier in the Upper Dawson Valley. I am also the member for Callide who represents a large agricultural electorate; however, I do not meet the environment office protocol. Absolutely appalling! I have written to the environment office and asked for an explanation, but I have not yet received a reply.

This goes further. Regardless of the environment office's ideas of protocol, I did attend the meetings. To my amazement, at the Emerald meeting the department people asked if there were any sugar cane or bananas growing in the area. This displays their total ignorance and lack of knowledge with regard to cropping and horticultural practices of the area, the very subject that they were delivering their best management explanation about.

While the government has made an attempt at conveying the reef legislation message, it is clear that much more needs to be done. There has only been one meeting at Biloela for the entire Dawson Valley watershed, which extends from the junction of the Fitzroy River to the southern slopes of the Carnarvon Range north-west of Injune, a huge area with many small communities and hundreds of grazing, farming and agricultural businesses. There were only 30 people at the Biloela meeting.

Reef legislation will be complicated and erroneous for many in the agricultural sector and I implore the government to make more effort to help the people become aware, to navigate and to comply with the legislation. I recently read a letter written by 17th century philosopher Voltaire which seems strangely but entirely relevant. It states—

I believe that a sensible peasant knows more about agriculture than authors who from the seclusion of their libraries issue instructions as to how the earth is to be ploughed.

They are 300-year-old words that still carry relevance.

There are many subjects I would like to speak on which have had an impact on the Callide electorate: the closure of rural birthing facilities, the state's debt and how it is forecast to grow to approximately \$130 billion, the projected \$9 billion shortfall in road maintenance funding throughout the Queensland road network, the closure of agricultural colleges, youth crime, youth justice—the statistics

are out of control and it is a system that is broken, leaving people living in fear in their own homes—bushfires, lack of personnel for harvesting small crops of fruit and berries, and the list goes on and on. However, I would like to devote the remainder of my time to making some comments about energy.

The Callide electorate is a huge energy provider for Queensland and Australia. We have two coal-fired power stations, Callide and Kogan Creek. There are also some of the largest solar and wind turbine operations in the state. Among them are AGL's Coopers Gap Wind Farm at Jandowae, the largest in Australia. The Callide electorate is home to a large proportion of the CSG gas industry, providing both industrial and domestic gas to Queensland as well as gas supply to the LNG facility at Curtis Island near Gladstone, which is exported to the world.

There is much talk about creating alternative energy sources, particularly around the production of hydrogen, the different methods of doing this and the economics and viability of using hydrogen as an alternative energy fuel. The Callide electorate has a major part to play in the production of energy for this state. This creates many problems and issues that concern the people of the electorate.

There are genuine concerns surrounding the possible future closure of Callide B Power Station. How will this affect the economy and the community of Biloela? Is there any job security? Is it possible to retrofit the power station to an alternative fuel source of gas, hydrogen and ammonia to keep it in service? These are some of the questions that have been asked by the people of my electorate.

There are two trial proposals to create hydrogen in the electorate, one at the Queensland Nitrates plant at Moura and the other at Kogan Creek Power Station at Chinchilla. Both of these proposals involve creating hydrogen via electrolysis, or water splitting, using electricity from solar and wind power. This gives rise to the term 'green hydrogen', a term which I question.

The sun and the wind cost us nothing and they have no carbon footprint, but the machinery that utilises the sun and the wind to create energy does. You need concrete, steel, aluminium, glass, plastic, copper, lead, zinc and a host of other rare earth metals to build this machinery. You need heavy industry, big ships and transport. All of this is built overseas. To argue that it is renewable and green is stretching the truth. It is smoke and mirrors; it is political hype and spin, designed to deceive the common man into thinking that it is something that it is not.

Recently I have heard the term 'hydrogen ecosystem'. This in my opinion is another misuse of the word 'ecosystem' designed to mislead. Can someone explain what ecosystem can survive in a hydrogen environment? There is going to be one built at Gladstone apparently, so we will wait and see what happens in that space.

As the government takes us into the future with a 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030, the production of alternative energy fuel sources such as hydrogen, the construction of huge wind and solar farms, the closure of some of our coal-fired power fleet and increased use of gas-fired power generation, what exactly will the cost of power look like for the average Queenslanders come 2030? This is something I would like to know and this is something that the people of the Callide electorate deserve to know.

We have seen what has happened in the southern states with the closure of Hazelwood and Northern power stations—and the flagged closure of Yallourn and Liddell power stations—and how this affected the cost of electricity to the consumer. Are we to expect the same here in Queensland? Yes, I think so; we are travelling the same road.

In closing, I repeat what I said in my maiden speech: I have made a mound and I stand upon it. I will be on good terms with all persons as far as possible, without surrender. De omnibus dubitandum—question everything.