




Speech By
Jonty Bush

MEMBER FOR COOPER

Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2021

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Hydrogen Industry

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (2.31 pm): What a time to be a Queensland! Our health response to COVID has been world class, with stable leadership under a Premier who has been resolute in protecting the health of our people, which has in turn led to a stable economy. Our leadership has been noticed, and this is reflected in our internal migration rates particularly, as people flock to Queensland from other states and territories. I do not want to detract from the devastating toll that COVID has had, particularly in other jurisdictions, but there have been opportunities worth reaching for through this global pandemic.

The opportunity to work closer than ever before with industry partners to create the Queensland of the future has never been more present, and now we learn that Gladstone is set to become Queensland's green energy manufacturing centre following a government partnership with leading renewable energy and hydrogen company Fortescue Future Industries. This partnership will see the world's largest hydrogen equipment manufacturing facility built right here in Queensland. Hydrogen is cheap, is clean burning and is the most abundant element in the universe. It is often described as the fuel of the future—an energy source that can bring the world to net zero emissions. Can you imagine a future like that? I can and it is awesome.

The first stage of the project will be a hub that will build green energy infrastructure and equipment such as wind turbines. Importantly, it will manufacture hydrogen electrolyzers. It is the first step of a six-step, \$1 billion-plus operation—\$1 billion invested into this renewable energy operation right here in Queensland. It is a breakthrough not only for this state but also for Australia's green energy market, and it is predicted to double hydrogen production capacity worldwide. The project will create over 300 jobs over the life of the project and is expected to create thousands of jobs in years to come, with construction starting as early as next year. This is another demonstration that progress towards net zero does not come at the cost of jobs; in fact, it creates jobs for the future—skills that are sought not just domestically but also globally.

The Palaszczuk government this year announced an investment of \$2 billion into renewable energy and hydrogen jobs as part of our COVID-19 economic recovery plan. This investment spearheads further development of Queensland's resources sector while at the same time helping to deliver on our 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030.

It is such a comfort to be living in a state with a Premier who is decisive, a Premier who values evidence and science—something that is becoming rarer by the day in Australian politics. What this country needs right now is leadership on climate change at the federal level. Sadly, we just do not have it. While Queensland is on its way towards achieving our climate reduction targets, we know that so many of the policy levers necessary to pull do see it at the federal level.

The 2020 Climate Change Performance Index prepared by a consortium of think tanks looked at national climate action across the categories of emissions, renewable energy, energy use and policy. Australia's performance was singled out, with the report saying that the re-elected Morrison government 'has continued to worsen performance at both national and international levels' and that the Morrison government 'is an increasingly regressive force in negotiations'. Now the Prime Minister has opted out of attending the upcoming Glasgow climate summit. What could we expect from the coalition, which in 2015 led Australia to the unenviable title of being the first nation in the world to undo legislated action on climate change with the repeal of the carbon price mechanism?

This federal government's climate change policy is weak, directionless and inconsistent. It would seem the Liberal-National coalition is becoming less like strange bedfellows and more like Stephen King's psychological horror *Gerald's Game*. While the Prime Minister continues to fall over himself to placate the Nationals, he risks Australia being left behind and risks investors withdrawing and channelling their efforts and innovations into countries with explicit climate reduction targets.

Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce likens climate change to a menu in a restaurant, demanding to know what is on the menu before he sits to order. I hate to break it to the Deputy Prime Minister, but if you do not have an appetite in the first place then nothing will satisfy you. If the Prime Minister had integrity he would ask Barnaby to acknowledge he is not hungry, to stand up and let someone else take a seat at the table.

This is what makes the Queensland government's partnership with Fortescue Future Industries so powerful: we can sidestep the lack of federal climate policy leadership and forge these relationships and investments in Queensland. Through this government's leadership, we will continue to grow Queensland's reputation as the global green energy superpower of the nation.