



Speech By  
**Julianne Gilbert**


**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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**PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT**

**Mercurius Biorefining**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.27 pm): Supported by the Palaszczuk government's 10-year biofutures road map, Mackay is shaping up to be a mecca for emerging industries. The Palaszczuk government has invested \$1 million to deliver a business case to potentially make the Mackay, Isaac and Whitsundays regions a hub for future foods and bioplastics and fuels. The additional focus on innovation and technology will also create more knowledge-intensive jobs in our region. Queensland is taking another step forward on its journey to build a sustainable biotechnology and bioproducts sector—a sector that has the potential to be worth up to \$1 billion to our economy.

US company Mercurius has brought its world-leading technology to Mackay to build a pilot plant and begin producing renewable diesel and jet fuel made from sugarcane waste. Mercurius Biorefining has developed patented technology called REACH that aims to significantly reduce the cost of manufacturing renewable jet fuel and other bioproducts. Finding a profitable sustainable solution for sugarcane waste will diversify our economy and put Queensland at the forefront of renewable and biotechnology. These projects are what the Queensland Palaszczuk government is all about and what we have been working hard to achieve. Mackay is now going to be looked at on the world stage for a three-month trial.

QUT and Mercurius are working together at the research laboratory at Racecourse Mill, and I look forward to seeing more opportunity in this sector. I went out to have a look at the plant and it is progressing well in its build. This project further strengthens Mackay's credentials as a leading biorefinery location. The operation of the pilot plant will support a range of skilled jobs to run the trials and test the products. The plant will scale up production of biofuels and biochemicals. The demonstration scale biorefinery will initially target production of four tonnes of renewable diesel and jet fuel daily and is expected to attract a combined investment of \$11 million and create around 50 jobs.

Over the longer term, based on the performance of the pilot and demonstration plants, the company plans to establish up to five commercial scale biorefineries across regional Queensland. This project is great news for sugarcane-producing regions of Queensland in terms of potential future high-value jobs and investment. It is because of our hard work and world-class health response that we can really focus on opportunities that will help us to recover from the impacts that COVID-19 has had on our economy.