




Speech By
Michael Berkman

MEMBER FOR MAIWAR

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MOTION

Electricity Supply

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (5.49 pm): I rise to make a contribution on this private member's motion brought by the member for Traeger. While we disagree with the Katter's Australian Party on a great many things, there is a lot in this motion that we do agree with them on. The strong support for public ownership that is evident in this motion is absolutely something the Greens support and that we have been vocal about for some years now. There are some pretty much indisputable facts for Queenslanders in leaving energy generation to the private market. It means less stable energy, it means less secure jobs and it means less for ordinary Queenslanders but more profits for multinational energy corporations that we are inviting into this state.

Both Labor and the LNP have left virtually all new renewables generation to be built in Queensland to be built and owned by the private sector. Since Labor privatised electricity retail in 2006 prices have nearly doubled. These are the sorts of facts that bite every day for Queenslanders. Under current plans, the proportion of electricity generation owned by Queenslanders will drop. This was laid bare in estimates this year. We had confirmation that the government's policy is to maintain majority public ownership as we transition to renewables. That is compared with the current level of public ownership which is around 67 per cent.

Mr Boothman interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Theodore, you are warned.

Mr BERKMAN: That is a pretty significant drop. That represents a 17 per cent drop in public ownership under current policy settings. Seventeen per cent of our publicly owned generation assets will be privatised by stealth. We need to talk about CleanCo. It is clear that CleanCo is a PR exercise. It is the flagship for the government's renewable policy at the moment. Under CleanCo the proportion of publicly owned renewables in Queensland will drop. Since it was announced in 2018, CleanCo has not built any publicly owned renewables.

I understand that of the 1,000 megawatts that it has been touted to deliver, 720 megawatts will be power purchase agreements. They will be guarantees to buy electricity off private generators, effectively locking in their profits. Only 100 megawatts—a drop in the ocean—will be publicly owned by CleanCo by 2024. Adani has built more renewables than CleanCo. Shell has committed to building more renewables than CleanCo.

Under the plan that the Greens took to the state election we would end electricity privatisation by establishing Energy Queensland, a democratic, public authority that has responsibility for all generation, transmission and distribution networks and retail. Our plan would have meant 20,000 megawatts of publicly owned renewables, which is closer to 80 per cent public ownership, by 2030.

Broadly speaking we do support CopperString 2.0 and expanding into the North West Minerals Province. This needs to be done responsibly, with strict environmental regulation and good enforcement of that regulation. It is essential that we get these raw materials for the renewables expansion. We need them to reach 100 per cent renewables as quickly as possible. What we cannot support, which is in both the Katter's motion and in the government's amendments, is ongoing support for coal and gas.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change could not be any clearer: we cannot afford to keep using fossil fuels. They cannot be the basis of our energy system for any more than they absolutely need to be. It is an absolute dereliction of our duty to future generations. It is reprehensible for the government to continue to offer false hope by holding out the promise of jobs in coal. Coal is dead; it is on the way out. If we do not offer stability through that transition for those communities that rely on the resources sector that is digging up thermal coal or the electricity sector, we will have absolutely failed in our duty to Queenslanders. Electricity is an essential service. Private corporations simply should not be allowed to profit from something that every Queenslanders needs to live a good life. I support much of the intent of this motion, but in the interests of a safe climate we cannot support it overall.