




Speech By
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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Coal-Fired Power

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (2.35 pm): This morning government members were at great pains to claim credit for their weak and inadequate plans to cut carbon pollution. Right now they have a real-life opportunity to walk the walk. Queensland Labor must use their legal power to stop Clive Palmer's proposed new coal-fired power station in the Galilee Basin. This disastrous project would, according to Palmer's company, burn four million tonnes of coal every year out to 2070. Even worse, the plant exists to run his Galilee Basin coalmine alongside the Adani mine, sending even more thermal coal overseas as the world is turning to renewables. As a rule, I do not generally get up in parliament and go after one of my own constituents, but for this far-right, anti-vax, coal billionaire I will make an exception.

Letting Clive Palmer build a new coal-fired power plant would totally trash Queensland Labor's emissions reduction target of 30 per cent by 2030, and it would blow any chance of reaching their renewable energy target of 50 per cent by that same year, 2030. Let me be clear: those targets themselves are weak, inadequate and dangerous, but this proposal would take them off the table. On a very practical level, the power station would still be burning four million tonnes of coal per year in 2050 and for 20 years after that point. So much for net zero emissions by 2050!

Let's be real: that 2050 target is a death sentence and a distraction anyway. We need bold action, starting immediately, to reduce emissions by 75 per cent at 2030 and to net zero emissions by 2035. Part of that plan must be a clear timetable for phasing out our existing coal-fired power stations and a commitment that no new ones be built. Queensland has incredible opportunities to transition our economy to renewable energy and low-emissions industries, but the window of opportunity is rapidly closing. This week's announcements about hydrogen production count for nought if that energy is coming off a grid that is still being fed by Clive's new coal-fired power station.

If Queensland Labor's commitment to climate action is even half as deep as they claim in here then they will listen to the International Energy Agency, which said in May this year that there must be no new coal-fired power stations built, as of now, if we are going to stop the worst of disastrous climate change. They will listen to the chair of the Australian Energy Security Board, Kerry Schott, who said just yesterday that every coal-fired power station in Australia will likely be forced to close by 2035 or before. Even our relatively newer publicly owned coal-fired power stations here in Queensland are projected to start losing money by 2024, in only three years time.

The end of coal is coming, and at this point it is coming slower than the science demands but faster than Labor and the LNP are prepared to admit. If Labor lets Clive Palmer build this power station, it will be in direct competition with public and privately owned coal plants in Queensland. That adds up to uncertainty for those workers and adds to the potential for sudden, unplanned, disruptive closures. This is precisely why the Greens—the member for South Brisbane and I—have been joining the calls from so many outside the two old parties for a planned, orderly transition with a jobs plan for coal

workers and coal towns. Coal workers and communities have done so much to help build this state, so they deserve a fair go. They deserve a plan funded by government and developed by the local community. They do not deserve surprise closures a few years down the track.

So far the Deputy Premier and Minister for Planning, who has the power to stop this project, has shrugged it off. That is exactly the approach he took with the Adani coalmine when he was environment minister, before his department approved it. For three years, Labor figures, particularly the Deputy Premier and former deputy premier, pretended the Adani mine would never happen and would never get funded, all the while giving the company special deals, fast-tracked approval, free, limitless groundwater, all over the objections of traditional owners. In the end, Adani got their approvals and their tax holiday and they are claiming to be on the way to exporting their first coal. We know that the federal LNP wants to help out its mate Clive Palmer so Queensland Labor needs to pick a side or this project will just become another Adani.

Right now there are two Queensland government assessment processes underway, meaning there are two ways for Labor to stop this coal power station dead in its tracks. The Deputy Premier, as planning minister, could use his powers under the Planning Act to call in and reject it or the department of environment, under Minister Scanlon, could refuse to grant an environmental authority. Both are totally within the law, and I am calling on both ministers to back Queensland's future and reject Clive Palmer's climate-wrecking thought bubble.