



Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

Record of Proceedings, 14 October 2021

TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (3.19 pm): As the member for Callide has just said, this rush to renewable energy by an ideologically driven Labor government is putting our GOCs at risk. We all know that we are going to transition to renewable energy. None of us have an issue with that. We do, however, have an issue with the timing. When renewable energy is forced into the marketplace we end up with the results that we see in the Auditor-General's report.

It is interesting that the Auditor-General's report was about the income of the GOCs in 2019-20 and it was reported by the Auditor-General in February 2021. It was not about COVID at all. The government likes to blame COVID and use it as an excuse, but it has nothing at all to do with facts. The facts are that the generators have had to write down the value of their assets because they have not been able to compete with cheap renewable energy that is available during the day.

As the member for Callide said, there is none of that when the wind is not blowing and the sun is not shining. In fact, Stanwell has written down its assets by \$720 million, or 19 per cent; CS Energy by \$353 million, or 15 per cent; and CleanCo by \$35 million, which is eight per cent of their assets. In fact, CleanCo has gone a step further and written off the value of their Swanbank E gas station. If the government has its way and starts closing coal-fired power stations, what will we have to keep the lights on in this state? We are going to rely on gas plants.

The Queensland Audit Office has raised real concerns about the ongoing viability of CleanCo because it is buying its power off somebody else and then onselling it. That does not prove to be viable all of the time. Each of the generators have responded to this challenge—and this is in the Auditor-General's report—mostly through entering into agreements with the private sector to purchase renewable energy. They are not building their own, they are buying it off the private sector. In fact, what we are seeing is the government moving from government owned enterprise to the private sector in a stealthy way. They are closing down the government owned enterprises that earn a lot of money for the people of Queensland—in fact, keeping electricity prices down—and shifting that to the private sector.

The private sector has spent, as the Premier keeps telling us, \$8 billion on renewable energy in the last couple of years. Do members think the private sector want to see a return on that \$8 billion? Of course it does. Where does the return come from? It has to come from the people of Queensland. It has to come in the form of higher electricity prices, and that is what we are seeing. If the minister would like to go out there and talk to the people in the real world, the people who are paying their electricity bills, they are not saying their electricity bill has gone down over the last couple of years; they are saying their electricity bill has gone up.

Government members interjected.

Mr HART: They have gone up and they have come down a little bit through some of the government's subsidies. The government's big plan is to come up with some storage facility for the amount of renewable energy that they are putting into the marketplace. They are going down the

hydrogen road. We all know what has happened with this government before when it has had these high and mighty ideas. CS Energy had the Solar Boost scheme out at Kogan Creek and Stanwell had ZeroGen. What happened to both of those? Hundreds of millions of dollars went down the drain because the government went down this airy-fairy imaginary road. For the education of members across the chamber, the biggest hydrogen electrolyser in the world is 10 megawatts. It takes up 180,000 square metres of land. Can members imagine what we are going to need to build to contain the gigawatts of electricity that we have? Fair dinkum, this is pie-in-the-sky stuff and it will go the way of Solar Boost and ZeroGen—down the gurgler.