




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

North Queensland, Renewable Energy

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.42 pm): Townsville and North Queensland are literally powering ahead. This is on top of the Premier's recent announcement of the state Energy and Jobs Plan and has been widely welcomed by my constituents in Thuringowa. Just last Saturday my staff and a team of volunteers contacted hundreds of local residents to gauge just how important it is for them to have clean, renewable, affordable energy in regional Queensland with our plan to support thousands of jobs in the energy sector which will then flow into the manufacturing sector, because we want to see battery manufacturing and even solar panels made in regional Queensland. The week before I had an excellent discussion with residents of the Upper Ross Community Voice on the new energy plan and hope that through further engagement Minister de Brenni will come to Townsville for an energy forum.

Our energy plan not only tackles climate change head-on; it provides a clear future of renewable energy for our state and, importantly, creates thousands of jobs for the future. We already know that North Queensland and north-west Queensland punch above their weight in terms of resources, including rare earth minerals like vanadium which we will not only export to the world but also use in the battery manufacturing facility in Townsville at the proposed Landsdown precinct with proponents like Queensland Pacific Metals, Edify and Imperium 3, again supporting thousands of local jobs.

I also welcome the Premier's announcement this morning that General Motors is partnering with Queensland Pacific Metals to the tune of over \$100 million to ensure that we can create mineral production and battery manufacturing for GM in its EV fleet of cars, SUVs and trucks. That is amazing for North Queensland. We will be supporting thousands of electric vehicles across the world and that support is going to come from regional Queensland. Our state government already has a clear plan to back in the Landsdown industrial precinct. I thank Minister Bailey for the \$5 million for the intersection upgrade into that site. There is a further \$12 million committed for the internal roads and \$26 million, as the Minister for Water just said, to make sure that we get that trunk infrastructure there to support that site. We are already well ahead with Korea Zinc in the process of setting up hydrogen production. It is setting up its own plant to fuel its own fleet of hydrogen trucks.

The proposed energy precinct in Mackay, the Pioneer-Burdekin pumped hydro project, will produce massive amounts of clean energy for our state. It will dwarf Snowy Hydro and produce enormous amounts of clean energy. The pumps will work with energy produced by solar and wind turbines during the day which will be stored and used to crank up the massive pumped hydro turbines during the evening. I want to put that into perspective. Kidston pumped hydro will come online in 2024. It is 270 kilometres north-west of Townsville. It has a 250-metre vertical drop. It is going to produce 250 megawatts. The pumped hydro in the Pioneer-Burdekin proposed project has a 400-metre drop and will create 25 times—five gigawatts of energy—that of Kidston.

In 2019 at the Townsville regional parliament our government committed \$147 million to build the high-voltage line to connect the Kidston pumped hydro to the grid. With this plan for nation-building infrastructure, I am very pleased to see that CopperString is going to be part of that plan. The new

1,500-kilometre high-voltage line required to take this enormous amount of pumped hydro energy created is truly nation-building infrastructure. Build it and they will come. We have many more mineral-producing mines that want to connect to CopperString, so I am really pleased to see that that is part of the north-west plan in the energy grid.

Mr Healy: That's what Labor governments do.

Mr HARPER: The member for Cairns just took the words right out of my mouth: that is exactly what Labor governments do. We have a vision and we are going to create renewable energy through massive pumped hydrogen. If there is anyone in the public gallery who knows about North Queensland—I hope you do because the Cowboys play there—we are literally powering ahead with our jobs and energy plan. I want to thank the Premier and the ministers involved for getting behind this because of the 100,000 jobs that will be created.

Ms Camm interjected.

Mr HARPER: We should be very proud of that, and I hope the member for Whitsunday is there to watch every single one of those go ahead.