




Speech By  
**Jim McDonald**

**MEMBER FOR LOCKYER**

---

Record of Proceedings, 10 October 2023

**GAS SUPPLY AND OTHER LEGISLATION (HYDROGEN INDUSTRY  
DEVELOPMENT) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr McDonald** (Lockyer—LNP) (4.23 pm): It is a pleasure to rise and speak on the Gas Supply and Other Legislation (Hydrogen Industry Development) Amendment Bill today. Before I do, I would also like to offer my respects to the fires on Firefighters Remembrance Day and particularly remember Izzy Nash who tragically died earlier in the year.

I use the words of the shadow minister for natural resources: we are pleased to support the bill because it is one step in a process to see some of the Jobs and Energy Plan delivered for this state, but certainly not before time. I commend the committee and the LNP members of the committee—the members for Gregory, Callide and Toowoomba North—for their contributions and for their statement of reservation and I commend the work of the shadow minister, whom I recognise is in the House.

Whilst the LNP supports this bill, I remind those opposite that, just because they say the word 'renewable', it does not mean that it is actually sustainable. In using the term 'renewable' when it comes to hydrogen, there is a heck of a lot of work that has to happen in that space to make it affordable. Some scholars tell us it is one-tenth the affordability of what it could be and others say it is one-hundredth. We recognise and welcome the technological advances—and we are part of that journey—but just because the term 'renewable' is put in front of something does not mean that it is going to be sustainable. We need to continue to explore other technologies to ensure that we get this mix right because it is about the best use of water, resources and land. Where I come from, land and water are particularly important.

When it comes to the sustainability of hydrogen and some of its products or being able to use hydrogen and transport it, the volume of water that is required to deliver—and I note the shadow minister for water in the House who respects the security of water very strongly as do I in our rural communities—these hydrogen products is absolutely phenomenal. It is about making sure that we have best practice innovation and have a circular economy that actually is sustainable. We know that renewables are very important for our community, but so is affordability and reliability. As we have been talking about over the past few months, we have to make sure we have that base load power to ensure reliability and affordability, which I have been referring to.

I note that AgForce gave a very detailed submission to the committee inquiry. AgForce is not a group that should be taken lightly. There are 6,500 farmers in its membership base whose properties cover about 55 million hectares of the state. That is one-third of the state of Queensland. AgForce talked about property rights and making sure we respect the property rights of people who are going to be affected by some of these pipelines and potential acquisitions of land—or certainly easements across the land. We stress and highlight for the government the AgForce submission that talked about making sure the property rights of our farmers who will be affected by this legislation are protected.

There are a number of different issues that arise from seeing these easements and acquisitions of properties. Through my area we have a number of gas pipelines and power easements. Through those easements we have had some weed species unknowingly brought into the Lockyer Valley—they

might be a good legume in other parts of the state—and they have become rampant. There are other weeds that need to be considered in terms of a biosecurity risk when it comes to the movement of earthmoving equipment and other construction equipment for the building of the pipelines. I am sure that some of these easements will end up coming down off the fields and come back through the South-East Queensland corner. If it is through the Lockyer, we want to make sure our property rights are looked after and that that biosecurity threat is very well maintained.

I also stress the importance of leadership and having very good consultation with property owners. As we have seen through gas acquisitions in the Surat Basin and through the Downs, there have been some early acquisitions that ended up not being viable or ended up being handed in with the result that the businesses took a different direction. When looking at these hydrogen pipelines it is very important that, if the government is looking at trying to fast-track some of these renewable projects, the government shows good leadership and engages in good consultation to ensure it does happen and that businesses are there for the long-term so that we do not see that same problem happening. With good leadership there is a very viable option to coexist with these easements and pipelines.

Agricultural activity can take place with these pipelines and easements as long as companies and the government have meaningful conversations with farmers and landholders to make sure easements and acquisitions are done in a manner such that their farm operations can coexist. Farmers of all types are stewards for the land. They want to make sure their land is there for future generations and it is well cared for. They can coexist with these pipelines. They will work together with government. Unfortunately, there has been some consultation—I mention again some of the gas acquisitions—that was very poorly done. It left a sour taste in a lot of farmers' mouths. With hydrogen—I look to it being another set of pipelines—it is the same sorts of pipelines and the same sorts of areas and they are the same farmers. They are genuinely good people who will work with government and business. If you show good leadership and there is good consultation, it will produce a positive coexistence and respectful outcome for all.

I made note of my colleague the member for Callide's questions in the inquiry. He made a really practical point about the diminishing number of newspapers in regional areas and the lack of ability to give notification through those newspapers. The government did recognise that the notification process can be improved. We would certainly look forward to the government taking those concerns on board and making some modifications, whether that be online notification or some other local notification process through the community such as ABC Radio or other noticeboards and local forums in the community such as Facebook and different blogs. Many of the communities I represent have thousands of members in their community groups, and I certainly use those to get information out to the community. Perhaps the government could adjust the regulation so that we could see those things happen in our communities.

As I said before, it is all right to say that we are going to have renewable hydrogen, but let's make sure that work is done to see the industry is well supported in developing technologies. We support that and we support the delivery of a sustainable basis for these products. I would also raise the issue of Glencore wanting the government to look at amendments to see other products placed in those pipelines, because that is a practical outcome that would make other legislative changes unnecessary and would be a good outcome.

In closing, I want to stress that in our agriculture and rural communities we are all for working with the government to achieve sustainable outcomes. It just takes good leadership and good consultation to make sure there are minimal compulsory acquisitions of land. It will require genuine dialogue with our community and farmers to make sure their concerns are addressed and that these pipelines and easements can be done. We need to work with our rural communities to get a good outcome for them as well.