




Speech By
Linus Power

MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (3.27 pm): It is interesting to hear this debate because it seems like we have lost all of the old Nationals who used to support electricity and industrial development in this state. They used to support the jobs that came with it and they used to support new technology. You can imagine if we were building the new Callide Power Station now they would be saying, 'No, stop the wires! Stop it!' They are actually betraying the communities they claim to represent. They are letting those communities down.

I want to highlight a situation that has been described as a win-win. In a solar farm trial in western New South Wales they collocated solar panels with flocks of merino sheep. The sheep farmers described it as a complete win-win. Why did they do that? It was a win for the solar panels and the sheep, because the sheep kept the grass and weeds between the panels down so as not to obscure the panels, and at the same time the solar panels provided shade for the sheep and grass and helped prevent the soil from drying out.

This will be interesting for these Luddites here who are actually anti-country. They are anti-innovation in farming. The sheep farmer said—

It is actually quite astonishing. Some of the sheep look fantastic.

Mr Millar: Where is this from?

Mr POWER: Member for Gregory, it is near Parkes. It is good sheep country. The farmer said—

They're growing exponentially and the wool cuts are in the top 5 per cent in the district.

Ms Leahy interjected.

Mr POWER: That is right. I said it was in New South Wales in my first sentence. Those over there do not want to listen. They are Luddites who are anti-country. They are letting their people down in the country. This article is interesting. Compared to paddocks without panels on them, the stock of sheep was somewhat lighter, but that was made up for with the fact that the merino ewes and wethers that were grazing among the 54 hectares among the solar panels actually had a heavier wool clip.

Mr HEAD: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I ask you to draw the member back to the relevance of this debate.

Mr POWER: I certainly will get back to the relevance of the debate. We have been debating the impact of renewable energy, such as solar panels, on agricultural industries, which we have heard repeatedly. Perhaps the good member has not been listening to the debate. It is important that I rebut the issues that were brought up. As I was saying, the farmer said there was a heavier wool clip. He said—

It's relatively clean, without burrs, without dust. There's very, very little contamination of the wool and they're protected from the sun as well.

The capacity of the land meant the wool clip had increased by 25 per cent. That is a great result. As the House knows, I am the grandson of a sheep farmer and we spent lots of time on the sheep farm. This industry is very important to me. We saw that commitment to the wild dog fencing. If we did not have those who were fighting against this tooth and nail, irrationally playing politics with this, we could see agricultural innovation like this in a win-win for agricultural industries. Instead, we have those who are actually not looking to innovation for the future. They are destructive of the very communities they pretend to represent. It is truly only Labor that represents regional areas, and it is certainly only Labor that will deliver a renewable energy future.

When we look at the front bench to my left and the front bench to my right, there is one thing they have in common—that is, there is nobody from the National Party on them. They have absolutely betrayed the National Party and their identity. They are no longer—

Mr MILLAR: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. Can you draw the member back to what he is supposed to be talking about?

Mr POWER: That is a very good point. I thank the member for Gregory, and I will come back to the point. The point is that only Labor will deliver a renewable future and only Labor is committed to the bush.

Mr HART: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member for Gregory raised a point of order and I did not hear you rule on that.

Mr POWER: My apologies. I conceded.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Member for Logan, I ask that you come back to being relevant.

Mr POWER: I conceded that I should come back to the point. I was just getting excited. Only Labor will deliver renewable energy for Queensland. Only Labor wants to work with farmers to do innovative things for their industry. I notice the agriculture minister is here. He is the farmers' friend. He backs innovation in farming, unlike those over there who want to tear down the regions.