




Speech By
Mark Boothman

MEMBER FOR THEODORE

Record of Proceedings, 14 September 2023

TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (3.23 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the examination into the Auditor-General's report titled *Managing Queensland's transition to renewable energy*. I would like to highlight the comments made by the members for Gympie and Toowoomba North with regard to the location of these massive solar and wind farms potentially in areas of high environmental significance and also, very importantly, farmlands which produce all of the food and fibre that we need to keep our economy going and feed our population.

Looking at population growth figures, over the next 40 years we expect our population to grow by at least 50 per cent, so the Australian population will be over 40 million people. To feed that massive population increase we need to ensure that prime agricultural land is protected and that it can be used for the strategic cropping of orchards and other such purposes. Therefore, it is critically important that we take necessary measures to ensure this land is protected for these purposes. As we all know, overall the world's population is growing and we are competing in a global market when it comes to valuable food sources. Australia is one of the leading nations in the world when it comes to these food sources, and protecting them from unnecessary solar farms over top of those deep blacksoil plains is certainly very important. I would like to highlight South Australia's environment and food protection areas, which were introduced to protect the vital agricultural land surrounding metropolitan Adelaide from urban encroachment. That could also be emphasised when it comes to solar farms.

I was on the wind turbine committee in the Gympie region, and one of my concerns during that process was the migratory birds in that area. As you know, wind turbines can travel at over 100 kilometres an hour, and a migratory bird flying through one of those will certainly get the raw end of the turbine, so to speak.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BOOTHMAN: I take that interjection. It just shows you that we need to be very careful where we place these turbines to ensure these issues do not happen in the future. I would also like to address some of the findings in the committee report. The Auditor-General made five recommendations. In reading the report, one of the interesting things is that diesel generation is not included. In Queensland we have about 1,000 gigawatts of diesel generation, and I find it quite interesting that it has not been included in renewables. That is a major oversight, especially with regard to the debate today about diesel buses that were promised to be EV buses. It emphasises that we need to be a lot smarter when it comes to how we deal with this.

I would like to leave my comments dealing mainly with protecting prime agricultural land. We need to be strategic about this. If we are going to install windfarms and solar panels then we should make sure they are in areas where they will have less of an impact on the environment while, most importantly, protecting our prime agricultural land.