




Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH**

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Record of Proceedings, 10 October 2023

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

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (2.57 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Gas Supply and Other Legislation (Hydrogen Industry Development) Amendment Bill. There is not much in this that is controversial at all. Queensland is a good provider of energy to the world. When we are providing that energy, it is very important to give some consistency to our overseas partners both when they invest and when they rely on us, because they, too, want energy security. A couple of times now we have seen that come under threat by actions of this government that have made our overseas partners nervous. That has also happened at the federal level in relation to gas. It is good to see a bill come forward that puts in some necessary regulations that are sensible. I think there will be a requirement for more regulation as we move towards the production of hydrogen, its movement around the state and its preparation both for our consumption and for export.

As I say, there is not a lot in the bill that is controversial but there are a couple of key things that I think need to be considered. One involves compulsory acquisitions, which affect people's property rights. Often this can be a difficult time for those people whose property rights are affected. When it is for a government piece of infrastructure, we can see the greater good. When it may be a private investor for corporate reasons, for private profit, then we need to make sure it is treated very carefully. We need to make sure that it is open and transparent. We need to make sure that a social licence has been earned so the community generally can see that this is of benefit to Queensland—themselves and the people of Queensland—and that the compensation being sought is reasonable, whether it be for an easement or an actual tenement. This bill addresses some of those issues, but I think we need to be cognisant that there are some concerns around compulsory acquisition powers. I think it is important that we take those seriously.

As we went through the committee process there was some discussion in relation to coexistence within easements. Where possible, it is good to have legislation that would allow an easement to have multiple users. It can be difficult to have common use infrastructure here because of the different nature of the gas that is being distributed, but it is something that we should make sure we are cognisant of and treat well. When these properties are finally acquired, either for easement or overall ownership, it is important that as these pipelines are constructed and developed we are aware this is farming property when we go onto people's properties. People would be very aware that on the Darling Downs just west of me, particularly in some of the closer areas on the blacksoil plains, a fair amount of damage was done back in the early days. People just rode around in their utes, jumped over people's property and did not follow instructions clearly. It is important to make sure that we have both legislative and regulatory controls to ensure biosecurity and correct behaviour when people are going onto people's private property where there may have been an easement granted for construction purposes.

It is also important to make sure that there is good, open and transparent notification so that people have a clear understanding of the process, what is happening and their rights in that process. That should be not only from the government that is providing the regulatory framework and legislative

implementation but also from proponents as they go ahead. They should make sure they are communicating clearly with anybody who may be affected in a very open and transparent way so that we can all have some confidence in the development of this industry, which I think is very important for Queensland's future. It is also necessary that it is taken care of in an appropriate way.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Members, can I ask everyone to watch the volume in the room. I am finding it a bit challenging to hear the speaker on his feet.

**Mr WATTS:** Most of the submissions that came through were supportive, although I do note that some of the local Indigenous organisations have potential concerns, and they should be noted. There should be an open and transparent conversation going on to provide them with some reassurance. Ultimately, there is not much in here that would be controversial at all.

In conclusion, the LNP—and me personally—are very supportive of developing the state's energy resources, including hydrogen and that industry, and making sure we are well placed to take it forward if it becomes the fuel of choice for users. It needs to be done with respect to property owners, it needs to be done for the benefit of Queenslanders, and it needs to be done in an open and transparent way when a social licence has been earned by the proponents. I think this is the first piece of legislation we have seen come through. I look forward to making sure we set up a regulatory framework that works for the people of Queensland and the proponents who might be developing this.

It is interesting to note that, when it comes down to regulatory frameworks around resource extraction, the Fraser Institute has started to mark Queensland down. We have been dropping over the last number of years.

**Mr Stewart:** That's rubbish!

**Mr WATTS:** No, it is certainly not rubbish. They certainly have. I take the interjection from the minister. He is referring to the fact that overall Queensland may well have gone up, but that is to do with the price of coal and not this government's regulatory framework. It clearly shows that, in a regulatory framework and sovereign risk coming directly from the government, there has been a drop by the Fraser Institute. I hope the minister can come in here and make me correct the record, because that would mean he is doing a good job in ensuring Queensland has a competitive regulatory framework. Unfortunately, I fear he will not. It tells us that other states are climbing in the ranks of the Fraser Institute when it comes to regulatory frameworks. Queensland is not.

It is a good thing this legislation has come forward. When it comes to regulatory and legislative frameworks there are opportunities for us to do better in future, not only with hydrogen but with all of our resource extraction. With that, I commend the bill to the House.