




Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR TRAEGER**

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**ENERGY (RENEWABLE TRANSFORMATION AND JOBS) BILL; CLEAN  
ECONOMY JOBS BILL**

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (8.44 pm): Again, in a cognate debate with more bills lumped together, it makes it very difficult. I will focus on the Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill. According to the government, the bill is the key next step to deliver the Energy and Jobs Plan through legislation, aiming to enshrine key commitments from the plan in law, create the infrastructure frameworks needed to build the Queensland SuperGrid and establish the governance and advisory functions for a smooth, coordinated transformation that ensures workers and communities are supported. That is certainly something that we in the KAP do not support. Through the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan the government have outlined that they believe this is an ambitious but credible pathway to transform the state electricity system to deliver clean, reliable, affordable power for generations. They are lovely flowery statements.

Finally, apparently this pathway will see the state achieve 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030, 70 per cent by 2032 and 80 per cent by 2035. As a member of the KAP, I can simply say this is not for us. I know I speak for many North Queenslanders in saying this is not for us. This is a perpetuation of the things that are devised here and the ideologies that are rife here. People who sit out in the regions will look back at this. Those opposite laughed at the member for Mirani and they might laugh at some of the things I want to say. However, I assure them that there are people out there who are laughing at members in here. They keep mentioning the word 'science', and I am no climate scientist. I am happy to sit here and debate anyone on it, but I am not a climate scientist. These are the things I have been fed in this House before.

I was told there were problems with vegetation management when no-one has ever measured the regrowth of vegetation in this state. They were saying there was a problem but they could not even tell us about regrowth. They sat in here and told us—and told the rest of the world—that the Great Barrier Reef was dying when we had two record years of coral growth. We sat in here at that very time and heard how it was dying and we had to save it, so we had to change these draconian laws related to the farming industry.

KAP brought into this House a proposal for a four per cent mandate for ethanol. If someone came along with a policy that could reduce vehicle emissions by 30 per cent in petrol driven cars in Queensland at no cost to the consumer, would the government not go for it? Why would they not push it? On numerous occasions KAP has attempted to bring in the mandates but we are always told, 'You can't force drivers to choose their fuels. They must have a choice.' However, they did not give us a choice on renewables. They forced us down this road.

The thing that really interests me in all of this is, 'What is the life cycle costing on this?' I can tell honourable members now that electric vehicle experts at QUT would say that in terms of the life cycle, something driven on biofuels would have a much lower carbon footprint, if that is what is important to people. We never hear about these things. I am not too sure how many in this House have been to see

the footings of a new, big wind tower. I have seen the amount of concrete and resources that go into these things; it is pretty scary. We are only scratching the surface on this issue. We are only seeing a fraction of what is going to roll out.

Here is the other clanger. When producing electricity, the generation needs to be close to the consumers to prevent transmission losses in the network, which will always be a problem. All of our prime agricultural farming country is located along the coast where our big populations are. The government will not be able to roll out more of these types of things without increasingly using prime agricultural land. They cannot reach those numbers without using more of this agricultural land. Agriculture is one thing we do well.

We have a global competitive advantage in biomass. However, we have not moved one bit towards biofuels or biomass. Everyone in this House should go to the Manildra factory in Nowra if they want to see environmental innovation at work. They claim to have zero emissions. That could be done throughout our sugar industry. We could have four or five similar facilities. I can tell honourable members what we have seen since we have been here: one has closed in Queensland, the Dalby ethanol plant. The government had an opportunity to save it, but it has now closed. That is what it has done. They could have put true environmental action in place, so pardon me for looking at this with extreme cynicism.

This is an anti-coalmining bill. You cannot reconcile this against the benefit we have gained from the coal industry. This can do nothing but attack the future viability of the coal industry. I do not think there are too many electrical engineers or experts in the field. I do not know how the government is going to achieve the dispatchable base load in the future without these coal-fired generators as it seeks to phase them out. It can throw these hydro batteries it wants to talk about—

**A government member:** Storage.

**Mr KATTER:** Exactly; I take the interjection on storage. They are not electrical engineers and nor am I. Pardon my cynicism but you cannot do this without dispatchable base load, and it is not done anywhere else in the world. Members talk about countries in Europe, but those countries are still connected to nuclear and the grid. They still take advantage of dispatchable base load even if they do not want to. It plays a role in the stabilisation of their grid so it cannot be removed.

Earlier, someone asked who would want a nuclear power station in their backyard. We do not mind. People in the north-west know what large dispatchable base load can mean. They know it links to their prosperity. In North Queensland, we know that you need this stuff to get by. There is an intrinsic affinity with knowing what we have to do to move forward in the economy. I saw the 40 or 50 megawatt station at Mount Isa. I did not go to the opening, but I have driven past it to make a video. Probably two or three people are working there. I do not know where the transition jobs are. I know that for Mount Isa there were no local jobs in the construction of it. They tried to switch on the second half of it and it shut down the town for five hours—another blackout, such as we get.

Earlier, the member for Hill mentioned that we had all these arguments about the privatisation of power when Newman was in. We had a big flush of Labor Party members talking about privatisation. There is all this talk about selling off the power stations, but aren't we privatising our power generation in Queensland through this? I will give members a picture of what that looks like. With the Diamantina Power Station in Mount Isa, we have had four or five blackouts in the past 18 months. That is very significant, but they say, 'It's not really our problem.' However, we are off the grid so it is a pretty big issue. You can lose control over the autonomy with the new mining customers. The critical minerals that members keep talking about do not just happen; you have to provide some affordable energy. Diamantina is saying, 'If you want to come and talk to us, then you'll have to pay an exorbitant amount for your electricity and you will have to take a 10-year take-or-pay contract.' That is what happens when you privatise the electricity industry.

I can tell members what happens when the asset stays in your hands. I think this might have happened under the Labor Party when Peter Beattie was in government. In Townsville, Sun Metals Zinc got a four- or five-year guarantee on what they would pay for their power. You can do that when you own the assets. You will get that price. Twenty or 30 years later and still there are hundreds of people working at Sun Metals Zinc because the government played a role in controlling the market in these things, but is divulging itself of this.

I will pay the government some credit on CopperString. That only took 15 years of advocacy. That transmission line is in the hands of the government. It will play a role. I can tell the House that it is not about enabling renewables; it is about connecting the industrial might of the North West Minerals Province with the grid and providing affordable electricity to the North West Minerals Province. It is ridiculous to talk about any of this stuff if you do not have the minerals to do it. The North West Minerals Province had among the highest industrial electricity energy prices in the world, so it was done to resolve

that issue. While CopperString will play a role in renewables, that was the main driver from the start. The cost has blown out to \$5 billion. If you do that around the rest of Australia then the cost will be put back onto electricity bills. It must. That is a pretty scary prospect because we already have extraordinarily high energy prices. What could happen there scares us.

We certainly will not run from the nuclear argument. If you are serious about reducing carbon emissions then that has to play a role. At the federal level they say that it is too expensive so why would you bother allowing it into this country. That is a silly argument. You do not say that you cannot do it because it is too expensive. Wouldn't you let the market decide that? Isn't that the role of the market? Unless you have a fundamental ideological block against it—and I still would like to know what that is—it would be, of course, one of the most sensible ways to address this.