



Speech By  
**Samuel O'Connor**

**MEMBER FOR BONNEY**

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Record of Proceedings, 20 August 2024


**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

**Appropriation Bill**

**Clean Economy Jobs, Resources and Transport Committee, Report**

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (9.26 pm): As shadow environment minister, I will make a contribution to the emissions reduction and climate aspects of the estimates hearings. This was half the time that the energy and climate minister allocated for his session before the committee. Half the time was allocated to emissions reduction. I am very happy to spend as much time as possible talking about climate change policy and emissions reduction, but to have half the session on this I cannot help but think that maybe the minister, the Leader of the House, was deliberately trying to avoid scrutiny on the energy part of the portfolio where the member for Nanango had some excellent questions of departmental staff and the government owned corporations who could not be called in the emissions part of the hearing.

At the start of the hearing I tried to ascertain how much of the government's 20 per cent modelled emissions reduction in the Energy and Jobs Plan could be attributed to Pioneer-Burdekin. This is, of course, a project that is not a coordinated project so no EIS process has started. That means there is no cultural heritage management plan process started. There has been no federal EPBC referral. There is not even a feasibility study, a business case or even an investment decision. Despite all of that, it is apparently central to Queensland's decarbonisation and our state's action on climate change.

Somehow, despite all of that, the first stage will open in eight years. That is what we found at these hearings. Somehow the first stage will open in eight years. The member for Chatsworth ran through this government's history of not being able to deliver major infrastructure projects. He talked about Cross River Rail. Construction on that started in 2017. The first Queenslanders will not be using that until at least 2026. The second M1—

**Mr Bailey** interjected.

**Mr O'CONNOR:**—under the member for Miller, who is interjecting, will be nearly a decade from start to finish. Gold Coasters do not even know when we will be driving on the full stage 1. That is just a 16-kilometre road. There is a litany of projects that this government has failed to deliver. We should have absolutely no confidence that they will be able to build the largest pumped hydro scheme in the world in just eight years with none of those things completed.

I raised the press release that came out in June 2022 which talked about \$35 million being allocated to find a second pumped hydro project. Miraculously a couple of months later Pioneer-Burdekin was chosen as that project. That is not good enough for such a major project—the largest in the world. These studies and reports should be done before a decision is made or the government should just admit that they cannot say with certainty that this is going ahead. We should not be putting all our eggs in this basket. We need to spread our storage across multiple projects.

In the shadow energy minister's session she highlighted Project Kruger, which was confirmed by the CEO of Queensland Hydro. These are apparently alternatives to Pioneer-Burdekin, although the director-general, who is also the chair of Queensland Hydro, was not aware of this despite the CEO saying that he was certain that the department would have been aware of the studies that were conducted as part of Project Kruger.

The government did run a trial on Solar for Renters, which is a policy that the LNP has announced. It found a \$600 a year saving for the renters who took part in that trial. The minister kept going back to one-off energy rebates, but those will not put a single solar panel on the roof of a Queensland rental household. The quote of the session from the director-general was: 'The feedback we got was that the landlord was not sufficiently benefiting. It was good for the renter but not good for the landlord.' We are behind this policy. We are supportive of it. We think that this is a way that we can not only reduce our carbon emissions but also reduce the cost of living for thousands and thousands of renters across Queensland.

We also found out that the Premier was not leading by example by choosing to take a second private jet. He was not leading by example to reduce his carbon emissions. The good news was that the director-general confirmed at the hearings that QTravel will soon have an option for carbon offsets not only for air travel but for car rentals and for accommodation. I will certainly encourage the minister to counsel the Premier on how he can reduce his carbon emissions by using that system when it becomes active in the very near future.