




Speech By
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ENERGY (RENEWABLE TRANSFORMATION AND JOBS) BILL; CLEAN ECONOMY JOBS BILL

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (8.18 pm): I rise also to contribute to this cognate debate on the Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023 and the Clean Economy Jobs Bill 2024. These important pieces of legislation seek to change our energy supply industry for the better and create a way forward for our state's power network. The first bill enshrines key commitments from the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan into law. It will facilitate the building of a clean and competitive energy system for the economy and industries as a platform for accelerating growth. It will deliver affordable energy for households and business and support more rooftop solar and batteries and also drive better outcomes for workers and communities. The bill will create the infrastructure frameworks needed to build the Queensland SuperGrid, as well as establishing the governance to help transition the workforce and communities.

The second bill will establish targets of emissions reduction, these being 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, 75 per cent below by 2035 and net zero by 2050. It will also establish a clean economy expert panel to help facilitate this.

The Clean Economy Jobs, Resources and Transport Committee made four recommendations on the first bill and only one on the second. The important thing about all of that is the recommendations were that both bills be passed.

I have never hidden my thoughts on our energy system being kept in public hands, nor my contempt for those who have sought to flog it off. Queenslanders have shown again and again that we want our electricity assets kept in public hands, and our Miles Labor government backs this, so this legislation will enshrine our commitment to public ownership in law. It will require the minister to prepare a public ownership strategy that sets public ownership targets of 100 per cent for transmission, distribution and deep storage assets, and at least 54 per cent for generation assets. These targets are to be achieved by 2035.

The legislation will lock in our government's commitment to ensure workers at our state's publicly owned coal-fired power stations and associated mines have a secure future, choices and opportunities through this energy transformation. It will do this by enacting the Queensland Energy Workers' Charter which is a tripartite agreement between government, publicly owned energy businesses and the union movement which was signed alongside the release of the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan.

To give further certainty to the affected energy workers on our commitment to support them, the Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill enshrines the Job Security Guarantee in law. It establishes the Job Security Guarantee Fund which will be the mechanism to fund and provide support to these eligible workers. Queensland will need a diverse workforce, skilled tradespeople, technicians and university graduates, and this legislation will make sure that these workers have opportunity for training and skill development in new technologies to help support the estimated 100,000 more jobs in the energy sector and across the Queensland economy by 2040. This includes 64,000 direct and

indirect jobs across construction, manufacturing and operations, and 36,000 more jobs in green growth opportunities, including renewable hydrogen, battery manufacturing, resource mining and metal refining. To help facilitate this and build this workforce, we are investing in two new regional SuperGrid training centre and transmission hubs in Gladstone and Townsville.

I should address the elephant in the room as the federal opposition leader keeps banging on about nuclear power plants. I will lay out a few facts from my research. One—it has been said many times and I do not think anyone would disagree—nuclear power is far more expensive than renewables. Nuclear power takes far longer to build. I think this is at the heart of the current push. In the opposition's perfect world, while expensive nuclear is designed and built, coal, instead of renewables, would continue to provide power. That is what the game really is. There has been a lot of talk from the opposition about small modular reactors, in particular a Rolls-Royce one. I understand they are not actually built anywhere yet, and they are about 440 megawatts each. According to the Australian Energy Council back in 2019, the Rolls-Royce company proposed that a 440 megawatt unit would have a reported price tag of A\$2.7 billion. That would mean, just to replace Callide and Stanwell power stations, which provide 3.2 gigawatts of our needs, we would need about seven of these at a cost of around \$20 billion. That is without blowouts, as well as that price being five years old and pre-COVID. So, they are a decade away and, if they are even able to be built, imagine if the opposition wanted to supply the whole state which had a demand record this year of 11 gigawatts, how many would we need then? I also do not know what would happen with the radioactive fuel and waste—how it would be shipped, stored or disposed of. This junk is a lot harder to deal with than the wind and sunshine, coupled with pumped hydro and battery storage which we are bringing in.

If conventional nuclear was considered, it needs massive amounts of water for cooling. I ask: where on our beautiful coastline would that be built? It cannot be near the reef, of course, so the area from Wide Bay to the Gold Coast would be the obvious choice. I do not think any members in this place who live in coastal electorates would step up to say they think this is an option. However, I have heard Amanda Stoker, who is contesting Oodgeroo for the LNP, is keen on having one down Redlands way. I have only heard that; I am not saying that.

We need to treat the opposition's nuclear pipedream with the contempt it deserves. We absolutely do. This is fantastic legislation and I commend it to the House.