




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Record of Proceedings, 10 June 2025

ADJOURNMENT

Miriam Vale, Proposed Solar Farm

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (9.27 pm): Tonight I rise to speak on behalf of the Protect Miriam Vale Community. It is going through its own trials and tribulations with a proposed solar farm. I am here to register its opposition to the project and talk about the battery storage problems that it is experiencing. There is a bushfire risk to Miriam Vale, which is only 1.4 kilometres away from the proposal, road safety issues on the Bruce Highway with 170 extra vehicles per day, evacuation safety issues in the town in case there is a fire, and noise and vibration affecting Miriam Vale six or seven days a week. I also want to table on its behalf a petition of 220 residents.

Tabled paper: Nonconforming petition regarding opposition to the proposed Miriam Vale Solar Farm [610](#).

As has been mentioned here tonight, for some of these small communities that is a significant component of this community speaking up to have their voice heard as the deliberations for this solar farm continue to be debated in the Gladstone Regional Council. What this community is asking for is that it wants to be consulted. It needs to be involved in the process of what the future of this solar farm looks like.

The Baffle catchment is a pristine area. It is the only system left in Australia that has not been dammed or weired and there is a lot of concern from this community about what the future of a solar farm and the development in its region is going to look like. The community is also asking the council to put conditions around the renewable developments process and that the code assessable and impact assessable future of these sorts of developments do become a reality. I support its calls for these measures for more rigorous projects so that we can gauge what the benefit to this community is going to be long term, what it is going to mean around the social licence that these companies have and, more importantly, what it means for the Miriam Vale community as it feels neglected in this process.

I, for one, just want to make sure that if this project continues they have their fair share of legacy projects. I note that the council's DA process is quite cumbersome. It has been taking a long time to be addressed and, more importantly, leaving this frustrated community—

Mr de BRENNI: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I have been listening carefully to the contribution from the member for Burnett. It is my assessment that he is straying significantly into a matter that is before the House on the *Notice Paper*. I would ask you to ensure he is not anticipating debate on that matter.

Mr BENNETT: The member is right to rise on a point of order. I am cognisant of the bill before the House. I am talking about residents' desire for certain processes to be—

Mr de BRENNI: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member needs to hear your ruling on my point of order before he continues to offend standing order 231.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr O'Shea): Member for Burnett, could you confine your comments to your constituents' concerns rather than anticipating any debate on any future bill.

Mr BENNETT: I was endeavouring to do that. If I strayed, my apologies to the House. I think the Miriam Vale community need to be respected and I think their thoughts need to be considered in this process. On their behalf, I convey to the House that they have asked me to talk about what the future of their community may look like with these sorts of projects. I point out that the issues around these sorts of projects are not confined to Miriam Vale. Eighty or so projects around the region are being proposed. As we go forward, let us hope these projects have community benefit, get a social licence and, more importantly, that the future of these communities is respected as we make sure that, whatever renewable futures looks like, these communities are not forgotten. A shout-out to them for putting those 220 signatures in the House as a nonconforming petition. It represents their desire to be heard.