



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BURNETT

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ENERGY ROADMAP AMENDMENT BILL

GREENHOUSE GAS STORAGE AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (4.23 pm): I will predominantly talk about the Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill. I acknowledge all of the stakeholders and those who supplied submissions to the committee's inquiry. There was strong support for the bill's primary objective: to repurpose wells within the former EPQ10 area for agricultural use, particularly stock and domestic bores. This reform presents a practical and constructive solution to transform legacy infrastructure into a long-term asset for landholders.

The proposed amendments follow a decision by the previous Queensland government to permanently ban greenhouse gas storage activities in the Great Artesian Basin. The ban was given effect under the Mineral and Energy Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024—the MEROLA Act. To be clear, the bill does not affect the existing ban on gas storage in the Great Artesian Basin. As part of the MEROLA Act amendments EPQ10 was legislatively ended, and CTSCo is required to decommission the GHG wells on the site within two years or a later date fixed by the minister. Currently, the GGS Act only provides for CTSCo to decommission the GHG wells through plugging and abandonment.

Some submitters who are supportive of the bill's provisions regarding EPQ10 wells did suggest future investigations to look at all other legacy greenhouse gas exploration wells across Queensland. There is a suggestion that a statewide policy would provide protection for all landholders. This bill effectively addresses wells in the former EPQ10 area, which includes six wells, including one injection well and multiple monitoring wells. There are calls for a clear plan for the many other GHG exploration wells. Unfortunately, because of the MEROLA Act there are no other greenhouse gas wells in Queensland that have not already been decommissioned through plugging and abandonment. The only GHG wells in Queensland that are currently not plugged and abandoned are those located on the former EPQ10.

The Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill 2025 amends the Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009. I note in particular chapter 8, part 8. This amendment provides an important legislative pathway to address legacy gas wells and offers a mechanism for their rehabilitation and potential repurposing for community benefit. The amendments strengthen the accountability of operators while also recognising opportunities for productive landholder outcomes.

Water is a critical and finite resource for Queensland's agricultural enterprises. The conversion of rehabilitated wells into water supply bores offers an innovative and constructive use of infrastructure that would otherwise be decommissioned. This outcome supports resource security and delivers tangible benefits to rural and regional communities.

The GGS Bill contains a Henry VIII clause, which would provide that a transitional regulation may make provision about another matter. It did stir our committee up for a little while until many on the other side got to understand it. The explanatory notes talk about the justification for the Henry VIII clause. We are glad we got to the bottom of that, considering it was in the previous government's bill. The transitional regulation-making power provides flexibility to respond to unforeseen issues that may arise during implementation and enables immediate action to support the intended policy outcome.

The Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill represents a positive step in addressing legacy wells. The bill's intent is to provide a beneficial outcome and appropriate protections for landholders in the EPQ10 area. After years of indecision and no action, this is a starting point. This is sensible and responsible action for the long-term benefit of Queensland's agricultural sector.

The Energy Roadmap is great legislation. This is a great outcome. After 10 years of decline we finally have an Energy Roadmap that will reduce energy system costs for taxpayers by \$26 billion to 2035, preventing the average Queensland household from paying the extra \$1,035 a year they would have paid under Labor. The Energy Roadmap is a pragmatic and sensible plan. It opens the door for private sector investment and a market-led approach to drive our state's energy future—coal for longer, more gas, and more private sector investment into renewables and storage.

The bill strengthens public ownership, streamlines infrastructure and governance frameworks and provides a legislative framework to deliver CopperString. The Energy Roadmap is already in action, with state owned energy corporation CS Energy entering into a joint development agreement with APA Group to deliver the Brigalow Peaking Power Plant in the Western Downs last week. We know that the 400-megawatt gas peaking plant will be capable of reaching full output within five minutes. This is great technology and a great outcome.

In conclusion, there is more gas supply needed for Central Queensland. We know that the Gladstone hub is full. We need more gas in the north-south gas line that services our port, Maryborough and the Bundaberg community. We look forward to more action. This government is getting on with the job and delivering what we promised. More importantly, we are providing a sensible solution to a renewables future and an energy future that Queenslanders can afford.