




Speech By
Michael Berkman

MEMBER FOR MAIWAR

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Gas Industry

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (2.57 pm): This war that we are seeing in Iran is illegal, it is deeply irresponsible and it risks spiralling into something even more deadly. We are already seeing that with its expansion throughout the region. For regular people in Queensland, this war—a war that has been enthusiastically supported by Labor, the LNP and One Nation—is already starting to push up the price of everything. It is not simply fuel and energy costs but, through the cost of transport, everything is getting more expensive.

However, there is one group of people in Queensland who are absolutely rubbing their hands together with glee—and I have spoken of them before—and that is our big gas corporations here in Queensland. Because of the US-Israeli war in Iran, which again—I will labour the point—Labor, the LNP and One Nation have all voted to support, those massive gas corporations in Queensland are set to make giant war profits. I will offer one single example which illustrates the point. Santos, a very generous donor to both Labor and the LNP, as reported by the AFR, has done a deal to sell a shipment of Australian gas for more than double the normal price—\$121 million for a single shipment, which I understand is something like \$70 million more than the usual price. Perhaps the most insulting thing here is that, while regular Queenslanders are hurting and our public services are underfunded, we are still letting these massive corporations pay an absolutely piss-ant amount in—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr BERKMAN: Withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for Maiwar, that is unparliamentary language. Withdraw and do not use it again please.

Mr BERKMAN: I withdraw. They pay an absolutely pathetic, measly, ridiculously small amount in royalties. Last year they exported \$21 billion of our gas and paid just eight per cent in royalties, and the current scheme in Queensland has very little scope for that to increase at all, no matter what the price of gas moves to. Wouldn't you know it as well—I can assume it is just good luck on their part—nine out of 10 of these big gas companies also paid zero dollars in corporate tax over the last 10 years, and I table an Australia Institute report just so the numbers are on the record.

Tabled paper: Article from The Australia Institute, dated May 2025, titled 'Queensland LNG exports and tax' [383](#).

Queenslanders—everyday people—paid \$2.2 billion in registration last year, in a single year, while gas companies exported \$21 billion worth of our resources and paid just under \$1.7 billion in royalties. Who is prepared to accept that? Who on the government benches will take responsibility for that? I know plenty of Queenslanders who would give an arm and leg to pay just eight per cent in tax, but under Labor and the LNP only one kind of Queenslander gets this special treatment and that is the big gas corporations.

There are alternative approaches. Qatar—we know what is going on there at the moment—essentially exports the same amount of gas every year as Australia. Again referring to work from the Australia Institute, in 2023 Qatar took \$56 billion from their gas exports whereas we in Australia—the entire country—took \$10.6 billion. That is \$56 billion as opposed to \$10.6 billion for Australia. I table that document.

Tabled paper: Article from The Australia Institute, dated May 2025, titled 'Government revenue from LNG exports: Australia vs Qatar' [384](#).

In Norway, 78 per cent of the proceeds from their oil and gas industry goes into their sovereign wealth fund. That means that each and every Norwegian citizen has an extraordinary amount of money to their name. They get free world-class education—the list goes on.

This morning when I asked the Treasurer if he would tax big gas war profits, at least he was honest. He just pointed to last year's budget and said no. He was very eager to remind us about the way they are looking after what he calls the investment community. Just remember who that investment community is in the gas sector. It is Santos, Sinopec, Petronas, Origin, ConocoPhillips, Shell and Australia Pacific LNG. I do not want to be too speculative, but maybe it has something to do with the tens of thousands of dollars they get from these big gas companies. That is wildly speculative, I know. The rest of the Treasurer's answer was, frankly, mind-boggling. He went off on a ramble about GST shares and all the rest.

To Queenslanders I say: do not be fooled. We are owed more. We need a government that will tax big gas war profits. These guys do not work for you; they work for their big donors in the gas industry and, frankly, it is disgraceful. We will not stop fighting for big gas to pay a fair share until we get a return that will pay for the things Queenslanders need for a good life.