

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1613

asked on 13 September 2016

MS GILBERT ASKED THE MINISTER FOR MAIN ROADS, ROAD SAFETY AND PORTS AND MINISTER FOR ENERGY, BIOFUELS AND WATER SUPPLY (HON M BAILEY)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister provide an update on the benefits of potential jobs for the wider Mackay/Whitsunday region with the construction of solar farms in Collinsville and Whitsunday?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The Palaszczuk Government is turning the Sunshine State into the Solar State, and delivering on its election commitment to build a large-scale renewable energy industry, create investment and jobs and act on climate change.

On 8 September 2016, six Queensland solar projects totalling 300 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy capacity were successful in receiving funding from the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA).

We will support four of these projects, totalling nearly 150 MW, through our Solar 150 program, which will provide long-term revenue contracts, providing long-term financial certainty for proponents. This represents an outcome almost four times greater than our election commitment to run a 40 MW reverse auction.

These solar projects will create 600 direct jobs and hundreds more indirect jobs in regional Queensland, boost investment by more than \$600 million, and produce enough electricity to power 120,000 homes.

Of the six Queensland projects, two of those are in the Whitsunday region, delivering jobs and investment to the wider Whitsunday/Mackay region when construction commences in the first quarter of 2017.

The Whitsunday Solar Farm near Collinsville (58 MW) will generate enough electricity to power more than 23,000 homes. The project will create 116 direct jobs and \$122.4 million in investment.

The 42 MW Collinsville Solar Farm at Collinsville will be developed at the site of the former Collinsville coal-fired power station. The project will generate 80 direct jobs and \$95.9 million in investment.

The Member is a strong advocate for jobs and growth in her region, and I expect that she would be pleased by the release this week of the independent Renewable

Energy Expert Panel's draft report on credible pathways to a 50% renewable energy target by 2030.

The draft report shows that there is a potential for more than \$6 billion in new investment and up to 6700 direct and indirect jobs per annum between 2020 and 2030 – and that the Palaszczuk Government's renewable energy ambitions for Queensland will drive new investment and jobs in our regions.