

# Michael HART MP

Member for **Burleigh**

Shadow Minister for Housing and Public Works, Shadow Minister for Energy and Shadow Minister for Innovation and Digital Economy



7 October 2020

Ms Ellen Roberts  
National Director  
Solar Citizens  
[ellen@solarcitizens.org.au](mailto:ellen@solarcitizens.org.au)

Dear Ellen

## Re: Solar Citizens' Scorecard for State Election

Reference is made to our recent discussion and to the request from Solar Citizens for an LNP response to your scorecard questions. The LNP recognises the role of Solar Citizens as a community-based organisation working to protect and grow renewable energy in Australia.

As you know, while the outcome of this upcoming election will determine who will lead Queensland through its first fixed four-year term, it is far more important than that. It is about Queensland's future and who is best placed to guide us through the biggest economic crisis in almost a century.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government which has been in power for two terms, has demonstrated an inability to manage the economy. In addition to accumulating massive debt, the following failures are no doubt of concern to Solar Citizens: -

- The \$9 billion Labor cut from infrastructure in its first term
- Introducing nine new taxes ripping nearly \$4 billion out of the Queensland economy
- Underfunding the renewal of the existing road network by \$5.418 billion which, according to the Auditor general, results in risks to the sustainability of the transport network
- Cancelling its budget in 2020

It is widely accepted that Queensland was already in an economic crisis before COVID-19 and not because of it. In its latest research paper, the Queensland Productivity Commission warned that a return to regular policy settings post-COVID would be a disaster. Furthermore, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIQ) has called out the Government's economic recovery plan as nothing more than "a rehash of announcements" leaving businesses "meandering through COVID without any real plan".

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We believe our approach will stand in stark contrast to the record of the Labor Government. The LNP has an ambitious plan to stimulate the economy, to create a decade of secure jobs and lead Queensland out of this recession. Our economic plan includes policies such as investing in key infrastructure, building dams to improve water and food security and a no new tax guarantee to support private sector investment – including new large-scale renewable projects.

As you know, the New Bradfield Scheme is a visionary project that will harness the monsoonal rains of the North and take them west to irrigate an area the size of Tasmania. The New Bradfield Scheme will support 2,000 megawatts of hydro-electricity which is enough to power 800,000 homes with green energy.

## **Solar Citizens' Scorecard**

With the Palaszczuk Labor Government cancelling this year's budget, providing spending commitments has been made more challenging. However, the LNP has already said we would deliver a full state budget within the first 100 days of forming government. Against this backdrop, we are pleased to provide you with the following in response to the priorities raised in the scorecard: -

1. The LNP will work with the private sector, energy market institutions, households and businesses to build a sustainable energy future. To increase the amount of renewable energy, the LNP will fast-track approvals for major projects, including renewable energy projects to reduce power bills and create more green jobs.
2. We support household assistance to encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy technology.
3. In terms of improving grid security, with one of the longest grids in the world there is real potential for edge of grid opportunities such as battery storage and microgrids. We view Renewable Energy Zones for key areas as offering an excellent opportunity to couple new, cheap, clean energy with existing energy intensive industries to enhance their long-term viability and attract new businesses into regional areas. In this regard, we are closely monitoring the trial in New South Wales.

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4. We note the dramatic fall in investment in new large-scale renewable projects, which have dropped from 1400MW in 2017 to below 20 MW last year. The LNP recognises the significant opportunities offered by hydrogen and new renewable manufacturing industries. We have already announced significant policies to reduce electricity costs for manufacturing business to secure jobs and supercharge our manufacturing industry.
5. Two years ago in Our Economic Plan, the LNP confirmed it would maintain public ownership of Queensland's electricity system. We also announced we would mandate investment by our government-owned energy companies in renewable generation. The companies would have sufficient funds to allow them to build, own and operate new generation.
6. The LNP recognises that improving energy efficiency is the key to decarbonisation of our economy, enhancing energy security and fostering economic growth. As such, energy efficiency initiatives are part of our energy policy agenda.

We will continue to work with the Clean Energy Council, Energy Efficiency Council, Solar Citizens and other organisations with a strong interest in energy sustainability.

In addition to the above, the LNP has announced the establishment of our *Queensland Investment Partnerships* – a program primarily targeted at increasing private sector investment. A future LNP Government will work hand-in-hand with the private sector in delivering at least \$1 billion of new projects by 2024.

The LNP has a policy framework to position Queensland for the global shifts in energy that are taking place and we will ensure the state does not miss out on new opportunities and jobs. We thank the Solar Citizens for their advocacy for renewable energy and look forward to working with you in the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael Hart', written over a faint blue rectangular outline.

**MICHAEL HART MP**

**Shadow Minister for Energy**

**Member for Burleigh**