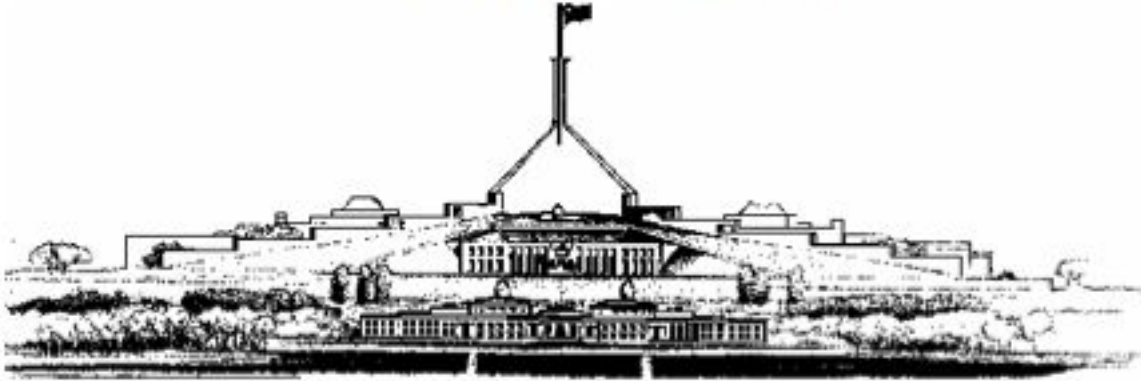




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

Federation Chamber

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Climate Change

SPEECH

Monday, 16 October 2017

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Questioner	Responder
Speaker O'Brien, Ted, MP	Question No.

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (18:28): This motion coming from the member for Moreton, who has clearly bought into the loony left's position on climate change and renewables, unfortunately suffers from an eternal lack of idea—completely void of reality, unfortunately. It is difficult, given the bland repetition of all of the usual motherhood statements and mantras, and with the usual lack of specifics, to get a handle on exactly what it is that the member for Moreton is actually asking for. It is very difficult—beyond, of course, his loyal abidance with Labor rhetoric.

Reading between the lines, it seems to me that this motion is the twin of an earlier motion put by the member for Griffith, but she at least told the chamber what she wanted, as nonsensical as it was: a big, new clean energy target and the end of the Adani coalmine. If we do these things, so it seems to the Left, then the Great Barrier Reef will be saved and, along the way, the planet will also be saved. Hallelujah! Apparently it's all that simple, but, as we know, the energy debate indeed is not that simple. Picking up one of the elements of the member for Moreton's motion, dealing with storage, demonstrates why the massive challenges we confront in relation to energy are anything but simple and why Labor's position is, yet again, so opportunistic.

Storage of renewable power has now become a central part of Labor's threadbare position; it never used to be. This is all very new for Labor. Previously, for Labor, wind and solar were standalone propositions—omnipotent, in fact. They were the perfect energy alternative—but, sadly, they're not. At least that particular penny has finally dropped for Labor. In countries where renewables constitute a significant part of the energy mix, desperate measures are underway, as we speak, to try to boost conventional backup to counter their intermittency and unreliability. That's as true in the UK as it is in Germany, in the US and in Australia—particularly in South Australia. Wind and solar have universally failed, in this regard, to deliver reliable power; to do so, they demand fast backup on hand all the time—24/7.

Storage in batteries has become Labor's plan B for wind and solar backup, based almost entirely on the South Australian Labor government's experimental construction of a 100-megawatt battery storage system at the Hornsdale Wind Farm, with a price tag for the taxpayer that's still top secret. Labor, both in Adelaide and Canberra, want to believe that this battery is the answer to keeping South Australia's lights on, in the face of the grave threat to grid security posed by an overreliance on wind this summer, but it's not. You only have to look at what Jay Weatherill is doing with the remainder of the half-billion-dollar-plus panic package he's desperately putting in place to see where the real grunt in the effort to keep the lights on and the air conditioners running in South Australia for the next two summers is actually coming from. Do you know what it is? Diesel. Next to the dusty desalination plant at Lonsdale, in the old GMH factory at Elizabeth, he's installing 276 megawatts of diesel generators—nine diesel units. How that squares with the platitudes and the call for immediate action from the member for Moreton is anyone's guess.

This motion, unfortunately, seems to be more mindless nonsense from the Labor Party. They simply cannot face the reality when it comes to meaningful, sensible, responsible action on climate change or the delivery of secure and affordable power. As we know, the Turnbull government is getting on with business. We are putting the reliability, security and affordability of energy at the top of our agenda—that's for families across Australia and for businesses across Australia. It does no family or business any good to have these sorts of foolish motions debated in this chamber.