

Powerlink abandons plan

By Di Stanley

Powerlink has abandoned its proposed state-of-the-art \$90 million Queensland SuperGrid Training Centre and Transmission Hub in Gladstone, putting the still undeveloped land on Bensted Road up for sale. Instead, the government-owned corporation has committed to an existing, scaled down operation in Bassett Street, Callemondah.

Gladstone MP Glenn Butcher blasted the LNP for renegeing on the permanent hub development, designed to train 500 energy workers each year as part of the former Labor Government's Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan in support of the energy transition to renewables.

It had been expected to create 90 jobs over 10 years at the facility.

"The whole thing's gone - they're going to operate out of a little shed," a visibly disappointed Mr Butcher said.

"That speaks volumes, doesn't it?"

"This is just another cut by the LNP. They're known for their slick slogans, but they're also known for their cuts and that's exactly what we're seeing here.

"It's just another slap in the face for Gladstone."

"I was out there the other day and had a look at it, the bunting's falling off the fence, it just looks like a hovel."

A Powerlink spokesperson said the organisation remained committed to a long-term presence in Gladstone.

"We have 57 people currently based in the region, which includes 16 apprentices, who continue to play a vital role in delivering reliable electricity to Central Queensland," the spokesperson told Gladstone Today.

"We have been actively evaluating options to ensure our hub matches our future work program, expanding workforce and ongoing commitment to delivering value for Queenslanders.

"Our aim is to provide the necessary facilities and equipment for our Gladstone-based work-



Gladstone MP Glenn Butcher pictured in mid-2025 at the Bensted Road site for Powerlink's Queensland SuperGrid Training Centre and Transmission Hub in Gladstone. The land will now be sold off. (Supplied)

force in a cost-effective manner that best supports the team, wider industry and the important work being undertaken in the region."

The spokesperson said the decision was made to purchase and upgrade the facilities Powerlink already occupied on Bassett St, including an additional lease on the adjacent site.

"This decision meets the needs of our team sooner and in a more cost-effective way," they said.

"The process to sell the property purchased at Bensted Rd is now underway."

In July last year, Mr Butcher, the former Regional Development and Manufacturing Minister, first identified that more than \$30 million had been slashed from the hub's budget and its timeline

blown out to 2027.

"This is the downside of a government that doesn't believe in these training facilities in regional Queensland," he said.

"There's just so much opportunity... it wasn't just about training the apprentices and the tradespeople, they would have come from all over Australia to this big hub.

"So, our restaurants will be missing out, our motels, and this is just another cut by the LNP.

"It's ridiculous and this just keeps coming - cutting funding to Stanwell (the \$12.5 billion Central Queensland hydrogen project) and the consequences of that was the hydrogen manufacturing, a whole industry stopped in its tracks."

Mr Butcher said he firmly believed the LNP Government was "hellbent on breaking Gladstone".

"This is the powerhouse of not only the state, but the nation, and for them not to be here talking about projects and talking up investment - what are they doing?" he posed.

"What's their alternative?"

"They've cut their training facility for Powerlink, they've stopped Stanwell, they've stopped windfarms - what are they actually doing for Gladstone and Central Queensland that they can put their name on, that's actually bringing the place forward?"

"I'd just about say nothing."

LNP to expand hospital, with more beds and dialysis chairs

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"Bryson has been continually s***-canning the Gladstone Hospital, and none of what has been announced is actually fixing the issues he's talking about because he knows full well Block 2 was only an old training area.

"The only thing he had been advocating for at the Gladstone Hospital was birthing services, and we got that sorted out, not him.

"He's been in for 16 months now and still hasn't delivered birthing services to Biloela."

Mr Butcher conceded the six new renal chairs, bringing the total to 12 available at the hospital, were a good investment, but one that Labor had already factored into its draft plan.

"That was part of a funding structure that was coming through," he said.

"We moved six renal chairs into the new facility in specialist outpatients, and the next step was to add an additional six seats, which is fantastic for our renal patients here in Gladstone."

Nurses Professional Association of Queensland president Kara Thomas welcomed the new hospital wing, with its 2500 sqm of additional clinical space, but warned more specialist staff would need to be recruited for the space.

"Beds without nurses are just furniture," she said.

"The new transit lounge is regularly closed due to short staffing.

"The ED is already running over capacity almost daily.

"Where are the experienced specialist nurses to safely staff these additional beds?"

Ms Thomas challenged Mr Nicholls to produce the workforce plan to support the expansion.

"If the government has a workforce plan for 51 new ward beds and specialist renal and HDU recruitment in Gladstone, it needs to show it now," she said.

"Frontline staff are telling us they are already

working over ratio, missing breaks and carrying unsafe workloads.

"New beds are welcome. But without funded, permanent specialist renal and HDU nurses, those beds risk sitting empty — or worse, being opened unsafely."

The new facility will deliver 51 beds and treatment spaces, including:

- 40 new inpatient beds
- Six new renal dialysis chairs
- Five new high-dependency unit beds

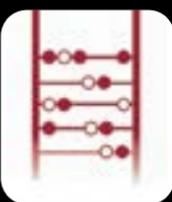
The expansion will include provision to increase to 60 beds and treatment spaces to meet growing demand.

There will also be an administration unit, staff areas, family lounges and a rehabilitation gym.

It will be delivered on campus, directly adjacent to the former Mater Hospital, with connections to the existing Gladstone Hospital.



Callide MP Bryson Head, Gladstone Hospital general manager Anita Pierantozzi, Health Minister Tim Nicholls, CQHHS chief executive officer Lisa Blackler and CQHHS chair Matthew Cooke at Gladstone Hospital for this week's announcement. (Supplied)



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