



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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Hansard 15 September 1998

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT Electricity Industry

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.37 a.m.), by leave: My Government is determined to do everything that it can to generate jobs for Queenslanders. Cabinet has therefore given the go-ahead, on the recommendation of the Energy Minister, for medium sized electricity customers to participate in the new national market from 1 October. More than 300 Queensland firms consuming between 4 and 40 gigawatt hours of electricity per year will soon be enjoying power bill cuts of up to 35%. That will be a massive saving for many Queensland employers.

It is estimated that the total effect of this price relief will amount to almost \$50m. That is a \$50m boost to the competitiveness of more than 300 Queensland employers. Greater competitiveness should encourage growth, and out of that growth should come jobs, because growth equals jobs. That is the bottom line for my Government. With the development of base load power capacity in north Queensland, there will be even more benefits in the future.

The rate of employment growth slowed considerably in the dying months of the Borbidge Government. In fact, the total number of jobs in Queensland was flat for the last four months of that Government. Faced with that sobering news, we have not sat on our hands or swallowed the Borbidge/Sheldon line that Government cannot make a difference to unemployment. We are grabbing every opportunity we can to get jobs growing again in this State, and cutting power prices for industry is just one example.

We will not just be relying on labour market programs to get jobs growing again. Faced with some of the most difficult economic circumstances the world has seen, we will be innovative in seeking out new ways to create jobs in partnership with the private sector. We will be delivering new initiatives throughout our term. We will not rest in our fight against unemployment.

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