



Speech by

Mr M. ROWELL

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

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UNIFORM ELECTRICITY PRICING

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (10.24 a.m.): It is interesting to see one Labor Minister supporting what is on the Internet and another being very wobbly about it. This Labor Government has dumped the policy of uniform electricity prices in the State, exposing Queensland householders to higher power prices. Distribution corporations—not the Government—are now responsible for maintaining uniform tariffs. The distributors have been given a set price up to which Treasury will meet the costs of uniform tariffs. If the price of power for the year is higher than the nominated price, the distribution companies will have to carry that extra cost. The only way that they will be able to carry that cost is to increase the price of electricity. Any bid to do that uniformly will mean the corporations will be undercut by other retailers. This means an end to tariff equalisation.

This is a massive betrayal of the people of Queensland. Before the actions of the Labor Government, under the direction of the member for Brisbane Central and the member for Mount Isa, uniform power tariffs had bipartisan support in this State. That has been underpinned by regional development. Regional and rural Queenslanders have been abandoned by this Government. They have been dumped. The onus for uniform tariffs has been placed on Energex and Ergon in the hope that the Government will be able to duck responsibility for the price rises.

Queenslanders will not buy it and they certainly will not be in it. They will know who to blame: the member for Brisbane Central, the member for Mount Isa or their nearest sitting Labor Party member. I will be very interested to hear what the member for Mount Isa has to say—

Time expired.
