



Speech by

**Mr ROB MITCHELL**

**MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS**

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Hansard 15 April 1999

#### **ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY**

**Mr MITCHELL** (Charters Towers—NPA) (10.16 a.m.): Labor incompetence on a classic scale—so familiar to all Australians in recent years—now has another major victim: a cot case power industry for this State. A decade ago, thanks to the successful planning of conservative Governments, Queensland was beautifully placed for the massive challenges that now confront this crucial industry. But because of the incredible neglect—by Labor—through two terms of Government earlier this decade, the price that Queensland power attracts on the national electricity market—in this era of increasing competitiveness—is a State disgrace. Our power chronically costs two or three times more than does power in Victoria or New South Wales. Price spikes can and do take that differential up to and beyond 100 times the Victorian and New South Wales price: up to \$3,000 per megawatt hour. Spikes of that scale have occurred regularly over the past summer and will occur during winter.

If we had a genuine—rather than an evolving—national electricity market today, the inability of this State to provide competitively priced power would make us the laughing-stock of this country. This situation is down to the current Minister and many of his current frontbench colleagues, including the member for Brisbane Central, who, as members of the Cabinet in the Goss Government, caused the development of a massive imbalance in Queensland's generating profile. Thanks to their dithering, we have too little base load and intermediate power to meet—cost effectively— even moderate levels of demand. Expensive peaking power has to be brought into play far too low on the demand curve because members opposite dithered for the six years that they were in Government when industry experts told them that they had to move quickly. And all the Minister wants to do is make excuses. Coalition speakers will establish tonight that there are none.

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