



Speech by

**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS**

Hansard Thursday, 10 August 2006

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## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL (ESTIMATES COMMITTEE D)**

**Mr KNUTH** (Charters Towers—NPA) (12.25 pm): In speaking to the estimates report in relation to Energy, I would like to raise an important issue. On Tuesday on behalf of the residents of Jericho shire, I tabled a petition from residents who are fed up with the substandard electricity supply. The petition calls on the government to find a solution to the ongoing power crisis that the residents of Jericho shire have endured for years. I would like to acknowledge the work of Ergon in installing a new generator, but alone it is not enough to resolve the ongoing problem.

An interrupted power supply is part of the daily life for the residents of Alpha and Jericho. The installation of a generator by Ergon is considered a bandaid measure and does not adequately solve the issue. While the generator has improved the supply, it is a draconian solution to a modern problem. The long-awaited proposed substation at Moonstone would alleviate current issues, and residents would not have to rely on generator power to service the towns of Alpha, Jericho and surrounding districts.

The lack of a reliable power supply has caused great stress for families. Regular blackouts hit during peak hour, such as dinner time, and residents and businesses have lost electrical equipment such as freezers and fridges, and cold and frozen goods are regularly thrown out for fear of contamination.

At present, electricity runs from Clermont to Barcaldine and then is distributed back to Jericho and Alpha—a system that results in extremities, with Alpha being subject to power surges or losses. The power is effectively doing a full circle in order to serve the residents of Alpha and Jericho. It would be more appropriate if the plan for a proposed substation at Moonstone, halfway between Clermont and Alpha, were brought forward. This would feed electricity directly through to Alpha and Jericho. This would eliminate the need for power to run across old worn out lines between Barcaldine and Jericho. This inadequate electricity supply and consequent blackouts or dips in supply have been continually experienced by residents of the shire. Residents are not asking for much, just the same as metropolitan areas, that is, a reliable electricity supply.