



Speech by

**Ted Malone**

**MEMBER FOR MIRANI**

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## **HOUSING AND ELECTRICITY SUPPLY, MACKAY**

**Mr MALONE** (Mirani—NPA) (10.16 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to inform the House of the situation in Mackay and surrounding regions. There is no secret that that area is experiencing boom times. Demand for housing and employment are at a record high. Indeed, employees working in the area are finding it very difficult to find housing. Visitors are being informed that if they intend to travel to or through Mackay they should ensure they have secured accommodation before they arrive. Most of the accommodation—hotels, motels et cetera—is at 100 per cent occupancy every day of the week.

Of course, with boom times there is always a downside. Unfortunately, even though businesses are thriving and employment is high, the situation with housing is in dire straits. There is a high cost for housing and the availability of housing is very difficult to keep up with. One of the issues we are finding is that, unfortunately, Ergon is unable to keep up with the supply of power to houses in the area. On the outskirts of most of the urban areas there is a waiting time of more than 12 months for connection.

Quite a number of constituents have talked to me about situations where they have had to pay up-front for the connection of their power—and that is a considerable amount of money—with a guarantee that sometimes it does not happen and that they will be connected in 12 months time. Ergon has that money—and, as I said, it is quite a substantial amount of money—and it is not able to connect power for 12 months. Houses are being built with generators and builders have to supply their own power. Because of the short supply of houses, people are unable to rent somewhere else. As a result, people are basically moving into houses and running generators 24 hours a day.

This situation also affects small businesses, and I will name one small business which contacted me only recently which had paid all of the money up-front in January this year and it looks like they will not have their power connected until April or May next year. They are setting up a farm-stay operation with a number of cabins. Basically all of their operation and small business is on hold until Ergon can supply power. There are numerous other situations. Mr Ian Robert Plath, who has just built a house, is running a generator full-time and does not expect to get power for 12 months. Mr Ken Soto, whose land was resumed by QR to expand Jilalan, has shifted a house onto a block of land and is—

Time expired.