




Speech By
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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Electricity Prices

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.17 am): I look forward to talking about the Labor Party's plan that Rod Sims has commented on in a moment. But let us have a look at what the energy minister did yesterday. He attempted to take credit for the Australian Energy Regulator's preliminary decision for the 2015-20 period which could see household power bills come down by \$34 next year. The Palaszczuk-Gordon government has not found the answer to lower power bills in three months in office. The only thing the Labor Party has delivered in three months in office is almost 40—no, from this morning it sounds like 41 reviews. Quite clearly, this is a result of the hard work undertaken by the LNP when in government.

Make no mistake: the only thing Labor has ever delivered Queenslanders is higher power prices. The energy minister will again try to lay the blame elsewhere. For his benefit, I will read the comments of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission chair, Rod Sims, made on ABC Radio last month on what has driven the increases in electricity costs in Queensland—

The network regulation was changed eight or nine years ago—
read 'under Labor'—

which meant that electricity spending, or spending on the electricity networks, really went through the roof—doubled or tripled—and of course that has flowed through to electricity prices. So the main reason electricity prices have risen in Queensland, as in New South Wales is because of the high network costs.

Those of us who were in this place at this time remember that the Beattie government was stripping dividends out of the energy companies, which meant that we did not have a reliable electricity supply. We then had the gold plating of networks which has led to massive increases in electricity costs that Queenslanders had to bear.

That is not the only thing that Mr Sims has had to say since Labor's election. He has poured cold water over its signature plan of merging power assets. We do not hear the Treasurer saying too much about that, apart from saying on radio, 'We're prepared to sit down with Mr Sims to find out where it is he might want to go because we're not too sure whether it will work at all.' In fact, the Premier has said, 'We might not be too worried about increases in electricity prices as long as they're not too big.' That is what we heard from this government.

What did the LNP do in government? We stripped costs out of the network businesses, knowing that this would put downward pressure on electricity prices in the future. That has been borne out of the AER's decision last week. We also looked to tackle retail costs, another big component of the electricity bill. We did that by looking to increase competition in the market. Again, yesterday, the energy minister tried to dress up his decision to delay electricity deregulation in Queensland as a win for households, but that is not what market experts are saying. That is not what

the Queensland Competition Authority chairman, Malcolm Roberts, has said. When he was asked on 4BC last year whether deregulation would lead to lower electricity prices, Mr Roberts answered—

I think it will. That's been the experience in other states. Queensland is making the move that's already been made in other states.

Perhaps Mark Ludlow of the *Financial Review* put it best in an editorial last week when he said—

The new Palaszczuk Government has again shirked its responsibility to undertake reform.