



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

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ELECTRICITY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (9.56 pm): It is very amusing to hear from the member for Hinchinbrook about not going over a cliff when he has just gone over one himself. I rise tonight to speak in support of the Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. This is an election commitment which allows for the network business merger between Energex and Ergon into the largest power company in the country with over \$20 billion in assets. This will be one of the largest corporate restructures in recent history.

The Australian Labor Party went to Queenslanders at the last election with a clear choice. On one hand, we had the LNP with the choice to sell off or lease Queensland's power assets; or with the ALP we had the election commitment to keep our energy assets in public hands and merge the government owned corporations of Energex and Ergon. This bill delivers on that promise.

This merger of Energex and Ergon into a single business commencing 1 July 2016 will result in a more efficient and effective operation throughout the network. These measures in the bill will result in Energex and Ergon altering statuses from GOCs to subsidiaries of a GOC, which will be a parent company. It will bring together their corporate and administrative functions and will have Energex and Ergon administering the operational functions of electricity distribution.

It is very evident through the contributions that those opposite have made tonight and through the committee process that they are eager to re prosecute their failed agenda of asset sales, or leases that were far longer than the life of the asset, for those who were unfortunate enough to fall into the propaganda well that was constructed by those opposite. Queenslanders have voted and have let their views be known on asset sales here in Queensland twice in recent history. On this side of the House, we are not willing to make the same mistakes of selling off our assets.

This is in stark contrast to the LNP who still cannot accept that the people of Queensland were not buying what they had to sell. The member for Clayfield, the Leader of the Opposition, still will not rule out this possibility. It takes leadership and fortitude to come out as a new leader and declare that you will not make the same mistakes of the government of days gone by. I had immense pride in our Premier, Anastacia Palaszczuk, when she did that after the crushing defeat in the election of 2012. That kind of leadership and fortitude is very much lacking in the new look LNP line-up. It seems the member for Clayfield cannot leave his broken dreams and rejected asset sales in the past where they belong.

It is very obvious that there will be efficiencies and more consistency through the bringing together of the GOCs as subsidiaries. This is a good thing and it is surprising that those opposite who bleat about the reduction of red tape and the need for less duplication are not getting behind this measure. These are measures that have more than the current or the next budget cycle in sight. They are long-term, considered measures that have been broadly consulted around and developed in close detail. This ties into the government's fiscal strategy and the debt reduction plan. Duplication will be

avoided in administration, boards, management, corporate costs and shared services. This merger will ensure that the Queensland tax dollar is spent more efficiently and will continue to see these profitable assets give back to Queensland's economy.

We have all experienced the spiralling power bills over the last decade and the electricity network prices are a large part of that. Having the network business running more efficiently will help achieve savings and long-term sustainable price outcomes. This is a good thing for the people in my electorate.

The audacity of those opposite, particularly the member for Whitsunday and the member for Southport, who sat across the table from electricians and electrical supply worker representatives and attempted—not well, I might add—to berate them on the prospect of voluntary redundancies, was hypocritical in the highest order and demonstrates just how truly out of touch these members are. This legislation proves that there is always a better way for government, but we can only make it work when we have a legitimate desire to look past the preconceived notions and genuinely engage with stakeholders and experts in the field.

I am proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with electrical workers and secure a better future, just as I am proud to have campaigned with them through their grassroots Not4Sale campaign through the last election and the one prior. Campaigns like Not4Sale are powerful in many different senses. To all those who campaigned, who stood up for what you believe in, I say: thank you for fighting back and ensuring that our public assets stay in public hands. This is for the green-shirted army who never gave up and never backed down. You deserve a better and brighter future than the LNP was offering. I am proud to be a part of a government that can work with you to create it and embrace it. I commend the bill to the House.