




Speech By
Shane King

MEMBER FOR KALLANGUR

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Electricity Supply

 **Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (2.36 pm): I know that all in this place join with me in sympathy around the recent supercell storms which ravaged South Australia and ultimately caused the electricity grid to shut down. What I think we will not all agree on, however, is the condemnation of those who chose to play politics and blame renewable wind energy for the collapse of the grid. When our Prime Minister implies to the nation that renewable energy was the cause of such a catastrophic failure which affected so many lives, I call shame on him and the LNP. In my first speech in this place I said—

When your lights and power go out, things are tough. It is frightening, for some people it is life threatening and it can be extremely difficult to cope with.

...

I understand how important it is to the lives of every Queenslanders who needs to turn on lights in the dark to keep safe, to have the fridge and stove work to feed their families and to be able to keep cool in the Queensland summer. After a storm, having your electricity back on quickly and the street safe from fallen powerlines are not just matters of convenience but also critical issues of public safety. I understand the importance of a safe and secure workplace for power workers because I have been one most of my life.

It saddens me that residents in this situation are fed false information about outages, particularly ones of this magnitude. Even the federal energy minister, Josh Frydenberg, has said—

Early inquiries into South Australia's blackout say it was not caused or exacerbated by the state's dependency on renewable energy.

The facts are that supercell storms with cyclonic winds ripped 22 transmission towers in South Australia's mid north out of the ground, bringing down three major transmission lines, which is believed to have caused the frequency of the grid to drop to a point where automatic shutdown of the entire system was triggered. You cannot transmit power from any source of generation—be it wind, solar, coal or gas—when the transmission towers are on the ground.

We have had similar events in Queensland with towers falling. Who does not remember Cyclone Larry in Far North Queensland in 2006? Nearer to us all, at Harland, not far from Esk, there have been two freak storms which smashed 275,000-volt transmission lines. I was a workplace health and safety officer and high-voltage access permit recipient the second time and witnessed the damage firsthand. Thankfully, our HV grid in Queensland has not collapsed like South Australia's did—in part due to a redundancy we have had built into our network called N-1. N-1 allows for backup feeders, sometimes of differing voltages, to bolster the system and avoid catastrophes like South Australia recently suffered. That is to say, we used to have the redundancy N-1.

During the last term of government the LNP chose to abolish this backup system, calling it gold plating. I hope—I really do hope—we are never sitting in the dark wishing we still had N-1. Once again to the LNP I say shame.