




Speech By  
**Dale Last**

**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 February 2017

**MOTION: NORTH QUEENSLAND, ELECTRICITY SUPPLY**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (6.10 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Burleigh. To say that the north has been doing it tough would be an insult. In reality, North Queensland has been punished relentlessly, demoralised and undermined by this government, which has failed to deliver funding for vital infrastructure that will regenerate the north and help to get its people back on its feet.

Unquestionably, a coal-fired generator in North Queensland is one such piece of vital infrastructure. As luck would have it, for more than two years now I have been advocating to have a base load power station built in my electorate on the old site at Collinsville. As enunciated by the shadow minister, the site is already there. The approvals are in place. The site is located right beside the coalmine. As people say, you can get a shovel and throw the coal over the fence into the power station. The grid network is there. The high-capacity transmission lines are there. All it needs is a commitment and a bit of vision from those opposite—a commitment by the Premier—to move forward and provide a base load power station in North Queensland that will provide that much needed, reliable, cheap power to really drive the economy.

The cold, hard reality is that renewable energy costs more than coal and gas, but Labor wants Queenslanders to pay more and this relentless pursuit of a 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030 will see our electricity prices more than double. If the government wants to make Queenslanders angry, then it should repeat what is going on in South Australia at the moment with the rolling blackouts, the intermittent power supply and now the debacle that is starting to emerge down there because that state does not have a reliable base load power station.

Just last week, the minister ruled out support for a power station in North Queensland. In a ministerial statement on 3 February he said—

There is simply no need for new coal fired baseload generation in North Queensland.

Also, on that day the Deputy Premier said that she is against the federal government's idea to support an overseas company to develop a coal-fired power station in North Queensland. We have the Deputy Premier, who is meant to be responsible for economic development, turning funding away—slapping private investment away from North Queensland—and saying that she does not support another coal-fired power station in the north.

The federal government has a \$5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility. Senator Matt Canavan is on record saying that electricity is a priority, but Labor continues to play politics instead of supporting jobs for North Queenslanders. Those opposite are not supporting investment, they are not supporting our farmers—our irrigators in my area—who are paying more and more for power. These people are providing jobs and economic prosperity for the north. The left is saying that it absolutely does not support base load power that would support the development of the Galilee Basin—tens of thousands of jobs for regional Queensland. Coal is used to fuel base load power stations. New clean coal technology will allow these power stations to be established in the north and provide the much needed power that we need.

The Productivity Commission report, which was commissioned by the Palaszczuk government and released in November last year, found that Labor's 50 per cent renewable energy policy will cost Queensland families \$317 million more for electricity between now and 2030. Businesses will pay \$221 million more and industry will pay \$746 million more for electricity between now and 2030. What will this increase do to our economy?

While those opposite continue on their path to destroy the economic prospects for North Queensland and the hip pockets of all Queenslanders by causing electricity prices to rise, the LNP members on this side of the House present an alternative that will benefit all—the development of a clean coal-fired generator in the north. The location is ready at Collinsville. I am saying, 'Build a new coal-fired base load station that will provide that cheap, reliable power that we so desperately need in North Queensland and do it now.'