




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 25 October 2017

MOTION: ENERGY SUPPLY

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (6.13 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by my colleague the member for Burleigh. I am sure there will be a lot of furious Queenslanders out there tonight when they hear that the Deputy Premier stood up in this place and labelled our motion calling for increased supply, reduced prices and more jobs a 'stupid' motion. I am sure they will be absolutely furious with that comment from the Deputy Premier. What a disgrace to get up in this place tonight and pour scorn on the motion moved by my colleague the member for Burleigh.

I have stood in this place on a number of occasions and voiced my support for a high-efficiency low-emissions coal-fired power station in North Queensland. Do we need affordable and reliable power in North Queensland? Absolutely we do. The fixation of this government on pursuing a 50 per cent renewable energy target will shut down power stations and threaten thousands of jobs. Let me reiterate from the debate last night that analysis of modelling prepared for the federal Climate Change Authority reveals that 75 per cent—or up to 15—of the nation's existing power stations will close under Bill Shorten and Anastacia Palaszczuk's crazy green energy target. That should be sending shock waves through every community in Queensland with a coal-fired power station.

Then, to rub salt into the wounds, we found out this week that Labor's 50 per cent renewable energy target would push up Queenslanders' power bills by another \$200 a year. What did the government do? They offered a measly 96 cents a week rebate which will be totally eclipsed by the \$200 a year hike in bills that the report forecasts. Is it any wonder that North Queenslanders are up in arms? The resources and agricultural sectors in North Queensland, not to mention heavy industry, are doing it tough because of spiralling electricity prices. They are being punished, demoralised and undermined by this government, which has put profits above people and a green ideology before jobs.

Yesterday the energy minister was furiously tweeting on social media that the LNP had voted against jobs. Minister, perhaps you would like to stand up in this place tonight and tell us how your relentless pursuit of a 50 per cent renewable energy target will reduce power prices. While you are going about it, how about you enlighten us on how many jobs will be permanently created when these solar and wind farms are completed. It is very easy to stand up and say that they are creating hundreds of jobs while they are being constructed. It is not so easy to stand up when they are completed and say there are four or six jobs.

A new base load coal-fired power station in North Queensland would create hundreds of permanent jobs, and could we not do with that in the north at the moment? Coal is used to fuel base load power stations which run continuously and provide reliable, uninterrupted power outputs. Renewables cannot provide that base load power because of their intermittency. You cannot power a smelter or a refinery from solar or wind power because if the sun is not shining or the wind is not blowing you cannot turn off the smelter or refinery until the weather improves.

This Labor government has repeatedly failed to deliver funding for vital infrastructure that will regenerate the north and help its residents get back on their feet. I have canefarmers coming into my office with six-figure power bills who, in their desperation for relief at spiralling power prices, are now

turning to diesel pumps. This side of the House is doing something about that. We have reformed the agriculture and energy council and we are working with farmers and industry groups to look at ways we can put downward pressure on power prices to give them some relief.

The Premier has stood in this place on a number of occasions and espoused her government's agenda to drive economic development and create jobs in the north. After three years we are still waiting. Fundamental to this growth is the cost of power, and whilst this Labor government is content to put out their hand each week and get a big fat cheque from the energy providers, North Queensland residents, small business owners, farmers and manufacturing firms continue to wither on the vine because of crippling power prices. The choice at the next election could not be clearer: vote for the LNP's real plan to bring down power prices or vote for Labor's electricity con, where they take with one hand and give you back crumbs with the other.