




Speech By
Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2017

MOTION: ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (6.17 pm): Last month Australia's Energy Market Operator released a report saying that Queensland's electricity supply is secure and reliable not just for this summer but for many, many summers to come. We are the energy powerhouse of the nation. I know that, being the member for Gladstone with one of the biggest power stations in Australia in my electorate, and this is not going to change. Our energy security—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. One moment, member for Gladstone. If I cannot hear the member for Gladstone next time, I will ask him to start again. I am in your hands, members.

Mr BUTCHER: Our energy security was confirmed this week with the launch of our Summer Preparedness Plan, which I see the opposition is waving around. No ifs, no buts, no maybes; Queensland's electricity network is ready for this summer with more than enough electricity supply to meet the expected demand. It is utterly reprehensible that the LNP would seek to tell Queenslanders and our most vulnerable that we are facing power blackouts and rationing this summer, not to mention the base fearmongering in telling Queenslanders that their beer would be warm of all things. What a joke those opposite are to this establishment! They are not fit for opposition, so there is no way they are fit to gain government. They have had to amend their motion because their attacks were factually incorrect. How many times do they have to write this? I will say this again for the benefit—

Mr HART: I rise to a point of order. The member is misleading the House. That was not why the motion was amended. I ask him to correct that.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr BUTCHER: As I said, they will need to amend it. I will say this again for the benefit of the pensioners and people with disabilities who the LNP have no doubt scared beyond belief: there is no issue with Queensland's power supply. The beer will remain icy cold even at the member for Clayfield's favourite pub, The Flying Cock. I would love to hear what your favourite pub is, member for Burleigh.

The Summer Preparedness Plan from the Energy Security Taskforce was borne from our Powering Queensland Plan. It includes responsible actions to increase Queensland's electricity generation capacity ahead of summer; ensure that our high-voltage transmission lines and interconnectors are prepared and our distribution poles and wires equipped and ready; and ensure that our demand management tools are available should they be called upon.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I have already indicated that if I cannot hear the member for Gladstone will we start again. I do not think we will do that though. You have the call, member for Gladstone.

Mr BUTCHER: We are increasing our generation capacity by bringing on new renewable resources and returning into service the Swanbank E gas-fired power station that had been mothballed by the LNP in the height of their asset sales frenzy. Queenslanders have not forgotten that at all. Queensland is a climate of extremes and, like we plan for drought by asking people to be wise in extreme heat, it is not unusual to ask people to be energy efficient.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I invite the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Industrial Relations to step outside and continue your conversations outside. The member does not have that much longer to go. Then we have two further speakers, then we will have a vote and then we will go to the adjournment debate, so I ask for your tolerance. I call the member for Gladstone.

Mr BUTCHER: I am sure that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition could run faster scared than the member could angry. On 21 December 2012 the member for Caloundra advised in a ministerial statement—

In some homes, air-conditioners can account for up to 40 per cent of the electricity bill during summer, so setting air-conditioners to 24-25C will keep you cool and save money. Every one degree cooler adds around 10 per cent to the amount of electricity the air conditioner uses—which quickly adds up.

These voluntary demand management tools are not new and have been part of Queensland's electricity network for decades. In fact, the PeakSmart program—which the LNP seem to have taken such offence to—was introduced by them in 2012. Seventy thousand people in South-East Queensland are already involved in the program. We are just rolling it out in regional Queensland on a voluntary basis for anyone who wants to get involved, help manage demand and help reduce their power bills. It is a 'head shake' moment when the LNP take issue with a program which was started under them.

Not to mention that, the day after the LNP's ridiculous overreaction to our announcement that we were extending the same program that they started, the federal government announced similar incentives to customers in southern states. They are your pals over there! Where was the outcry from the opposition towards their federal colleagues? As per usual—crickets. There was no outcry because this was pure gutter politics. Going by their reaction, the opposition would leave Queensland unprepared for the possible emergencies that are coming. Not getting ready for energy emergencies would not be like getting ready for cyclones, floods or bushfires. The Palaszczuk government's plan is to be ready, and we will not apologise for ensuring that Queensland's power systems remain secure, reliable and the envy of every other state in Australia.