




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Electricity Prices

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (6.26 pm): I rise to speak in support of the amendment. The Palaszczuk government is fixing the LNP's mess by putting downward pressure on electricity prices because we know that electricity is a major cost-of-living pressure for Queensland families. We are cleaning up their mess—and, boy oh boy, did they make a mess: a 43 per cent mess.

That is why we have extended the eligibility for concessions to another 157,000 Queenslanders to help them with their energy bills. I urge all Queenslanders to apply. I think this is a fantastic initiative. It has been extremely well received by baysiders.

Let us put some facts on the table. Electricity prices are the result of the national electricity market. While the Palaszczuk government is happy to fix electricity prices, what we all need is for the federal government to step up and fix the national electricity market, rather than simply fight amongst themselves.

The Powering Queensland Plan has been applauded by Rod Sims, Chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. He stated—

The good news is, the Queensland Government, alone of any government, has drawn on its own budget to remove that cost to consumers and I certainly applaud them for doing that and again I think it's evidence of a welcome focus on affordability ...

Our \$1.6 million comprehensive PQP retains electricity assets in public ownership, promotes Queensland's sustainable energy mix, including coal, gas and renewables, and provides power bill concessions to vulnerable Queenslanders. Our actions mean Queenslanders have the lowest forecast electricity price increase for 2017-18 of 3.3 per cent compared with 19 per cent in South Australia and the Australia Capital Territory, 11 per cent in New South Wales and 10 per cent in Victoria. It also confirms the government commitment to a 50 per cent renewable target.

Under the Palaszczuk government two large-scale solar farms have started generating power. In addition, there are currently a total of 20 renewable energy projects which are either committed or under construction. These projects will deliver 1,781 megawatts of renewable energy capacity, \$3.4 billion in investment and over 2,700 construction jobs, the majority of which will be in regional Queensland.

Contrast this with what happened under those opposite—not one single large-scale renewable project was commissioned under their term. More than 1,300 renewable energy jobs were lost. It was a renewable blackout. These new large-scale industries are not only supporting jobs and growth in our region but, once in operation, additional supply to market will help put downward pressure on wholesale prices.

Renewable generation is now the cheapest form of generation to build and is also the quickest. Because the Palaszczuk government has retained our energy assets in public hands, unlike the LNP who would have sold them off, we directed our government owned generator Stanwell to alter its bidding strategy to put immediate downward pressure on current and forward contract prices.

What those opposite fail to understand is how important it is to keep our assets in public hands. That is the way to put pressure on electricity prices. That is what the LNP planned not to do when they were in government. They had plans to sell our assets. Have we heard anything today about the future plans in that regard? I have not. We have kept our power generators in public hands.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I am having difficulty hearing the member for Lytton. As I have said before, if I cannot then I am certain Hansard cannot.

Ms PEASE: We are attracting new public sector investment in large-scale projects because we have energy security. Those opposite like coal-fired generation so much so that they want to flog it off to overseas interests and sacrifice those returns which are used to ease pressure on prices and the cost of living. The facts are in and the facts are that renewable generation is now the quickest and cheapest energy infrastructure to build and we urgently need new supply to reduce prices.

Over our term of government, prices for households have increased by an average of only 1.9 per cent. Let us go back to where I started. We need the federal coalition government to step up and fix the national electricity market rather than simply fighting amongst themselves. Never forget that energy prices increased by 43 per cent under the Newman-Nicholls government.

To date the federal coalition government has stifled investment in new generation, stalled progress in modernising the NEM and left Australia without a clear path to meeting its emission obligations. The only solution the LNP has offered is a new coal-fired power station which will take longer to build, cost more to build and generate electricity at a higher cost than renewable generation.

It is time for those opposite to stand up for Queensland with their federal counterparts. The Palaszczuk government is delivering large-scale renewable industry. Queensland is getting its own power stations, with 21st century technology, producing affordable, clean energy—

(Time expired)