




Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2017

MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Electricity Prices

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (6.21 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the shadow Treasurer and oppose the amendment that has been moved by the Treasurer. We cannot have a defined national policy if we have states racing off and bringing in their own stupid and ridiculous targets, such as the 50 per cent renewable target that this Queensland Labor government has put forward. In South Australia we have a prime example of what happens when states rush into a 50 per cent renewable target. They had the lights going out in South Australia and they have the highest wholesale prices not just in Australia but in the world.

There is no doubt that this government has been caught out using electricity prices as a hidden tax. The people of Queensland know that. The ACCC are coming to that conclusion very quickly. I attended the Brisbane ACCC meeting and I attended the Townsville ACCC meeting. What did the people who attended those meetings say? They said that they are being heavily affected by the price of electricity in this state. Who do they blame? They blame the Labor government. They have been using the electricity generators in this state to impose a hidden tax on the people of Queensland. They have been costing jobs in this state because they have been pushing up the price of electricity in this state.

We need to look no further than the budget papers. Budget Paper No. 2 shows people that the generators in this state have in fact earned \$410 million more than was anticipated in the previous budget. Did the Treasurer wake up one day and all of a sudden have an extra \$410 million sitting in his bank account? Did the generators tell him that they were doing a wonderful job of earning more money for the state? Did this ring alarm bells with the Treasurer? Did he think, 'I wonder how these generators are making so much money'?

It is quite clear that they were gouging the system by changing the way they bid into the wholesale market. There is no clearer proof of that than when the government announced its Powering Queensland Plan. When they announced their Powering Queensland Plan and gave a direction to Stanwell to change their bidding practices future wholesale prices fell immediately by 10 per cent. They only told one of the two generators to change their bidding practices. That is a clear indication that the government were gouging the people of Queensland. They have been using electricity as a hidden tax in this state.

Mr SPEAKER: I apologise, member for Burleigh. There is too much chatter. I counsel the Treasurer on his interjections that he should not interject so much that it appears he is trying to talk over the top of the member for Burleigh.

Mr HART: The expert panel says in relation to how to achieve a 50 per cent renewable target that prices should stay basically neutral. It says that because there is a hidden carbon tax in there. The calculations that lead to that conclusion show an assumed hidden carbon tax.

I was at Rockhampton a few weeks ago and went to Dobinsons Spring and Suspension. They have put solar on their roof. After the 30 per cent increases in electricity they are talking about scaling back their business and having to lay off people. This is happening all over the state. There is one group to blame—and that is the Labor Party. Those opposite have been using electricity as a hidden tax.