




Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

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**PUBLIC WORKS AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE: REPORT, MOTION TO TAKE
NOTE**

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (11.56 am): Before commencing, I recognise in the gallery students from the Miami State School who are from my electorate but who soon will move to the electorate of the member for Mermaid Beach.

It is interesting that the Auditor-General's report No. 5 was handed down in May 2017. It is now September and we are finally debating electricity prices in this House in terms of an Auditor-General's report containing some very interesting things. I will get to those in a moment. Before doing so, I shall tackle some of the issues to which the member for Murrumba referred.

The member said that 45 per cent of the items in this report were not regulated by the AER. As we all know, network costs represent about 50 per cent of electricity bills. All of that is regulated by the Australian Energy Regulator. While the member for Murrumba said that it is important to read these documents, it is also important to understand these documents and how the Australian energy network works, because quite clearly the member for Murrumba has no idea how this works.

When the Labor Party was elected in 2015, the first thing it did was start to push up the price of electricity, to the detriment of the people of Queensland. When the government was elected, network costs in this state were under control. The Australian Energy Regulator handed down its decision in 2015 saying that electricity prices should stabilise but in fact they did not. The reasons they did not are contained in this Auditor-General's report. If members opposite bothered to look at it, they would see that in the Labor government's first budget, in the 2015-16 year, they shifted \$4.586 billion on to the government owned corporations. They shifted that debt.

Mr Springborg: Who pays for that?

Mr HART: I take that interjection from the member for Southern Downs. The people of Queensland pay for that through their electricity bills. It is quite clear. I said in my reply to the budget in 2015 that if debt was shifted to these GOCs it would end up flowing through to electricity prices. That is exactly what has happened. People out there are hurting from electricity prices. As I travel around the state I see more and more people and businesses suffering from electricity prices. Pensioners are worried about putting their heaters on at night, turning on their TV, doing their washing and putting on the kettle because they cannot afford their electricity.

Those opposite have loaded up those GOCs with additional debt which they are being forced to repay. They are being forced to be more commercial than they have ever been. They are being forced to gouge the people of Queensland to get the return that they need in order to pay back that debt and in order to pay the dividends that this government is requiring those GOCs to pay. We have all heard that the government has insisted on 100 per cent dividends from these GOCs. They are ripping money out of electricity generators left, right and centre. As the member for Southern Downs says, that flows directly to the people of Queensland through their electricity bills.

It is clear when one reads the chair's foreword that he does not understand. It is surprising that a member who came out of the ETU thinks that the 'Stanmore Corporation' runs electricity in Queensland. It is the Stanwell Corporation! Perhaps the member ought to get his facts right before writing reports like this. Members should read the report: the \$4.586 billion worth of debt moved to our GOCs is pushing up the price of electricity.