




Speech By  
**James Lister**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS**

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**FOREST WIND FARM DEVELOPMENT BILL**

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (12.54 pm): I rise to speak on the Forest Wind Farm Development Bill 2020. First I will respond to some of the matters already raised in the debate. When I was in my office watching the live feed I noted that the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy had the audacity to bring some unfathomable falsehoods into this House concerning electricity policy in Queensland. As it has already been allowed by the Speaker, I hope Mr Deputy Speaker will allow me to rebut those points.

I heard the minister—and also, indeed, the Minister for Transport, who was just in the chamber—say that this is a bill we would never see under an LNP government. What nonsense! If a proponent emerges with a project that meets all of the requirements, has community support and is a suitable business proposition, of course it will be supported. That is no different from what the government proposes here with this enabling legislation.

We heard the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy—and, indeed, the Minister for Transport just before—talk about the sale of electricity assets. What nonsense! We are hearing these things from a government that seems to forget that Labor sold wind farm assets in this state. Labor is the party that sells assets in this state. We have had \$16 billion of asset sales in this state in relation to which senior ministers in the current government sat around the cabinet table.

**Mr Powell:** Including the Premier.

**Mr LISTER:** Including the Premier and the Minister for State Development, among others.

**Mr Powell:** It was a fire sale.

**Mr LISTER:** A fire sale of assets.

**Mr Powell:** The Treasurer.

**Mr LISTER:** And the Treasurer, yes. Where has all that money gone? It has been frittered away—on weight loss for dogs and unprivatising prisons, I suppose. We heard the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy talk about 43 per cent increases in electricity prices. The fact is—and everyone in this chamber knows—that those price rises were a legacy of the Labor government, which locked us into that. If people want to know who is responsible for power price rises in Queensland, it is the Labor Party.

We heard about power prices for regions. We heard a pious dissertation from the minister about cheap electricity prices for the regions. I have invited the minister on a number of occasions to accompany me to places like Toobeah, Weengallon, Bungunya, Wallangarra, Inglewood and Goondiwindi.

**Mr Powell:** And you can pronounce them!

**Mr LISTER:** I can pronounce them; that is right. I would love to have a beer with him and get him to meet locals in those areas who are paying way over the odds. They are a part of Queensland that has been cut away from the interests of this Labor Party government. They pay heaps more for electricity but we never hear the minister respond. Whenever I interject in the House the minister is usually good for a bit of a cross-chamber touch-up, but he always ignores me when I talk about that.

**Mr Powell:** We'll introduce competition, though, won't we?

**Mr LISTER:** I take that interjection from my honourable friend the member for Glass House. I will speak about that very point. Regional Queensland needs competition. Those who are shackled to Ergon, as the monopoly provider of electricity in this state, pay way over the odds. Why should electors in my electorate of Southern Downs and in other regional electorates like those of my friends the members for Gympie and Warrego pay more than everyone else and not be given access to competition like every other Queenslanders?

**Ms Leahy** interjected.

**Mr LISTER:** I take the interjection by the member for Warrego. We want to see more providers set up. That is something an LNP government would enable. It is entirely disingenuous and false for any member of the Labor Party government to come into this chamber and speak of electricity prices in regional Queensland. If they do not believe me, I invite them to put their money where their mouth is, come to the Toobeah pub, talk to the publican there, Michael Offerdahl, and to the locals to see what they think of Labor's mouthings about electricity. It is all just soft soap.

In their contributions to this debate, some of my colleagues made very vivid and correct observations about consultation. It is something that we in this chamber hear of a lot. We even heard from my honourable friend the member for Maiwar about a lack of consultation. It is a proclivity of this government—

**Mr Powell:** Friend?

**Mr LISTER:** Well, the honourable member for Maiwar is a guy I can get along with. Maybe we do not share a lot in common politically, but he is not a bad fellow.

**Mr Mickelberg:** Not as good as the LNP candidate, though.

**Mr LISTER:** That is true. Nevertheless, it has been said by everyone here who was prepared to tell the truth that this Labor government has a proclivity for riding roughshod over consultation when it does not suit its aims. Anyone who sits on my committee will have seen that. I am sure that everyone else who sits on a committee and sees how the committee processes are run and how public consultation is dealt with will agree with me on that point.

In order to demonstrate what I think the government should do when it comes to consultation, I would like to talk about the wind farm being developed in my own electorate. I just spoke to Michelle Holmes, the community relations manager for the MacIntyre Wind Farm project. As the local member of parliament, I would very quickly find out if a project like that, with large implications for residents in my area, was going astray or riding roughshod over their considerations, but that is not happening. It is a project which will deliver a lot of jobs, investment and renewable energy in my electorate of Southern Downs. I am proud of that. Why will the government not replicate what is happening with the MacIntyre Wind Farm to ensure that stakeholders are given the respect of consultation and the opportunity to have reasoned stakeholder input into government decisions? I am ashamed of some of the things I have seen this government do. The government needs to improve its game on consultation, but I suspect it will not have the opportunity because those who have been disadvantaged and disobliged by the government will turn this Labor government out on its ear at the coming October election.