




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

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ADJOURNMENT

Callide C Power Station, Fire

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (6.03 pm): On Tuesday, an explosion followed by a fire occurred at the Callide C Power Station causing massive power outages throughout the state from the border with New South Wales to north of Cairns—a huge geographical area. Units 3 and 4 at Callide C tripped just before 2 pm, with unit 2 at Callide B and Stanwell plus three units at Gladstone correspondingly tripping, creating chaos to the electricity supply in Queensland. Thankfully, through some miracle, there were no fatalities or injuries to the 260 workers at the power station. Their safety is front and centre and our first consideration.

The shortfall in electricity delivery was met by gas supplies and the importation of power from New South Wales until Gladstone and Stanwell were back online. This incident highlights the impact on our state when a loss of generation of this magnitude occurs. The power outage affected a total of 477,000 customers, with traffic lights going out across Brisbane, causing traffic bedlam, and businesses plunged into darkness and experiencing economic losses. It is expected further outages may be experienced before other generators can come online to increase the capacity lost by the fire before repair work can commence.

This incident demonstrates what can happen when reliable base load power is not available in the system. I call on the minister to explain what impact reducing the output and management of these power stations has had on this situation. These generators are meant to run under load, not be idled back every day. We are hearing that Callide 4 will not be back online for 12 months. While the other Callide generators will be back in service within weeks, this still leaves this state one major generator short at this time.

There are a number of generators undergoing service and maintenance as we speak so we are already a bit tight on supply, especially in the morning and evening when solar is not generating. Whilst events such as happened at Callide are rare if there is a large unscheduled shutdown it would create an interesting situation. This is where our gas-fired generators played a large role in stabilising the grid on Tuesday. They are an integral part of our energy mix.

There will be a workplace and health investigation conducted to scrutinise the cause of the explosion and subsequent fire. This should be an open and accountable investigation to ensure Queenslanders are fully informed on just how this incident happened. They deserve that. I once again call on the energy minister to show Queenslanders the plan for reaching the government's 50 per cent renewable energy target—one that will give the public and industry confidence that blackouts like this will not become a way of life.