




Speech By
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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Operation Energise

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (2.40 pm): It was a proud moment for me recently to address the crews about to be deployed on Operation Energise's latest incarnation to the Bundamba and Gympie area which, as we have all heard, recently were devastated by flooding. For those unaware, Operation Energise is an initiative of the mighty Electrical Trades Union that mobilises when Mother Nature shows us her worst side and Queenslanders have electricity issues that need to be urgently repaired.

Our publicly owned electricity network will always be restored faster than a privately owned one, but homes and sporting clubs still need to be made safe and rectified before they can reconnect to the network. Operation Energise is set up to help those who are uninsured and those not-for-profit organisations get back to some sort of normality as soon as possible. Having participated in one of these two-week deployments myself in Bundaberg—albeit a few years ago—I can relate to what a humbling experience it is to be helping someone whose home has been devastated. It is a simple job for us: making safe a switchboard, installing a new power point so they can plug in a fridge, radio, mobile phone charger or pressure cleaner. That can just be the thing that enables their rebuilding journey to begin.

There are some low points in doing this work as well. I give a shout-out to Mates in Construction for providing the specialised help and advice about what to do when conversations take a downward turn. Recently I was joined there by energy minister Mick De Brenni, parliamentary colleagues, member for Redlands Kim Richards and member for Bundamba Lance McCallum to talk to the crews before deployment. I know that they know our government appreciates their help.

I am always amused at the opposition's seeming hatred of the union movement—we heard a lot about it today—when its members are so supportive of other representative bodies such as AgForce, the chamber of commerce, the show society and REIQ. Maybe it is just worker representatives they do not like?

During my time here, I have copped heaps from those opposite for being a proud ETU member. For the record, I would not have it any other way. As a licensed electrician, I could not join the plumbers or teachers unions, both of which are fine bodies. But as I am an electrician, it is the mighty ETU for me! I stand here today with another good example of how good the union movement is and what it does for our community, stumping up to help when needed most. While at the same time the federal LNP goes missing in action, alternating between making excuses for why they cannot help and playing politics with tragedy, funding recovery efforts in conservative areas.

We know how to hold a hose and a whole bunch of other tools. No Queenslanders in desperate need will be left behind in Operation Energise's recovery efforts. If only our federal government learned from the examples in our state and the union movement, it may be more palatable to Australians. I look forward to hearing the member for Gympie stand up and commend the efforts of Operation Energise in his patch, because there they are doing a great job. Everyone in this place could learn from the mighty Electrical Trades Union.