




Speech By  
**Bryson Head**

**MEMBER FOR CALLIDE**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 May 2024

### **CHEAPER POWER (SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL)**

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (8.24 pm): One thing I know very well from spending a lot of time across my electorate recently is fortunately Queenslanders can see through the rot that is this Labor government. They know that this is just a temporary measure that is not going to address the fundamentals in the electricity system that have sent electricity prices skyrocketing thanks to the Labor government. Thankfully, Queenslanders are smart. Queenslanders are smart enough to know this is another government that has given up on fixing the fundamental prices of the electricity grid.

The member for Gregory mentioned electricity insecurity in Queensland, and many of the LNP members have also spoken about the blackouts we have had, about the air conditioners that had to be wound down at the start of the year because there was not enough electricity in the grid to power every home and every industry in Queensland. That is how much this Labor government has mismanaged the electricity grid in Queensland and it is an absolute disgrace. Ultimately, because of this and because of the flow-on effects of expensive electricity that is beyond not just the household but also business, the commercial entities and the agriculture sector, Queenslanders are struggling to pay their bills. We are in a cost-of-living crisis thanks to this Labor government.

We know that the cost of irrigation has gone up for a lot of people. I talk to farmers who say it is tough to justify turning their pumps on to grow food to feed the country and we wonder why the price of produce has gone up in this state. The cost of running a farm in general has increased as has the cost of logistics, of keeping fresh fruit and veg cold and keeping the freezers running. For industry and for logistics chains the prices have skyrocketed and then there is heavy industry. We have next to no heavy industry left in this country thanks to too much red tape and ridiculous electricity prices and, ultimately, Australians are paying the price.

This was even apparent at Beef Week, and people may think that a beef enterprise does not have too much electricity to worry about. However, even our beef producers are feeling the pinch of increased electricity prices in Queensland. Beef Week was a great event. I have a Beef Week tie on. If honourable members missed Beef Week there will be another one in three years. They should make sure they get up and enjoy it because it is a fantastic event showcasing the beef industry in Central Queensland.

Of course the Treasurer will happily get up and say that this rebate can only be paid thanks to coal royalties and it is not costing Queenslanders anything.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr HEAD:** The funny thing is why is debt increasing in Queensland and what are the interest repayments on that debt? Those opposite can laugh and carry on and make out that it is not coming from the back pocket of Queenslanders, but ultimately debt is increasing in this state once again under this Treasurer. That means there is not enough money to go around at the minute, but they are blowing far too much money on mismanaging projects and ultimately Queenslanders are paying for it. Once again in typical Labor form they are taking cash out of our back pocket and giving it to us on an electricity bill and trying to say that it is free money that has magically appeared.

I turn to some of the comments of the Minister for Energy. He spoke a lot about Callide Power Station and how it is operational. In his contribution one thing that I found quite intriguing was the fact that he did not make much mention of the C4 generator at Callide. He was saying that we are misleading the House and Callide is operational. We very explicitly talk about Callide C4 and we have also been talking about Callide C3, which only came online very recently; it was only a matter of weeks ago.

From the minister's contribution one would think that the Callide C4 generator is operational and is pumping plenty of electricity into the grid, but what was its capacity at 1 pm or at any time in the last few years? Zero per cent! I do not know what world the Minister for Energy lives in, but a generator operating at zero per cent is absolutely not operating. I table a chart outlining that evidence.

*Tabled paper:* Document, undated, titled 'Callide C' [832](#).

As far as his contribution is concerned, perhaps the energy minister should not mislead this House and Queenslanders. There is plenty to talk about in relation to Callide. I would happily talk all day and night about it.

**Mr Bennett:** You should!

**Mr HEAD:** I take that interjection. I would love to, but of course the Labor government does not like us talking for very long in this House. Typically they guillotine debate very quickly. There are a lot of bills that I would like to speak on but I do not get the opportunity because they simply do not care about democracy. This week in the *Australian* there was a great article by Nick Evans titled 'Callide C explosion secrecy beyond a farce as forensic engineer blocked from answering questions'. Who is this forensic engineer? It is Sean Brady. There is a difference in the information from CS Energy and from the government as to whether he was employed by the government to conduct that review. On 11 June 2021 the CS Energy website says 'Forensic engineer Dr Sean Brady has been engaged to lead an external, independent investigation and review on the incident on unit C4 at CS Energy's Callide Power Station last month.' If CS Energy put out that information then why, all of a sudden, are they stopping Sean Brady from releasing the report?

**Mr Bennett:** It's a cover-up!

**Mr HEAD:** It is a complete cover-up. It is the Callide cover-up. Ultimately it is the C4 explosion and mismanagement of the grid that has led to higher electricity prices in this state. It is an absolute disgrace. There was plenty more in that article, but unfortunately I will not have time to go into it. It is in the *Australian*. I gave the title so members can find it and have a read and they will see the dodgy behaviour of this Labor government.

I want to talk about electricity prices in the electorate of Callide. In the electorate of Callide we only have one electricity provider, Ergon Energy. The government is making out that there is cheap electricity in Queensland. On 30 June 2023, price per kilowatt hour was 22.135 cents. As the minute hand ticked past midnight and we hit 1 July 2023, the price per kilowatt hour was 30.227 cents. That is a 40 per cent increase in a matter of minutes under this Labor government. There was a 20 per cent increase in the service fee as well. That is the fundamental retail price of electricity in Queensland.

The Labor government is taking money out of your back pocket and giving it back to you to subsidise that increase and hide their failures in electricity in Queensland. Under their own policy in the bill that we are currently debating, the rebate will run out very quickly for many Queenslanders. When Queenslanders get their bill in about March of next year, when that \$1,000 and the \$300 from the feds runs out, what will their electricity bill be? It will be the most expensive electricity bill Queenslanders have ever paid. The government is going on about how cheap electricity is. Between 1 July and the election, Queenslanders will not pay much on their electricity bill. Right after the election it will be the highest electricity bill Queenslanders have ever paid thanks to the failures of the Miles Labor government.

In amongst all of this, as the electricity grid has shifted dramatically, the government is talking about a job security guarantee for workers. Ultimately, that job security guarantee will include relocation packages. At the end of the day, all the Labor government wants to do is get the workers at Callide and Kogan Creek power stations to pack their bags and move somewhere else. Where does that leave those communities? It leaves them behind. It goes to show that, once again, Labor does not care about rural Queensland, it does not care about regional Queensland and it does not care about fixing the fundamental failures in the electricity grid in Queensland. The LNP is committed to getting Queensland back on track. If Queenslanders want to see Queensland back on track, the best thing they can do is show Labor the door in 2024.