




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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ADJOURNMENT

Burdekin Electorate, Energy Supply

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (7.25 pm): On 2 February, the *Townsville Bulletin* quoted the Minister for Energy and Clean Economy Jobs as saying ‘power is an essential service’. For many of my constituents the significance of this statement cannot be overstated. For years now, the communities of Alligator Creek, Nome, Julago, Cungulla and Elliot Springs have suffered through repeated unannounced electricity outages—a fact the minister has not denied. Just yesterday there was an unplanned outage in this area that ran for 13½ hours. A constituent of mine—an Australian who served this country in East Timor, the Solomon Islands and Afghanistan—had some advice for the minister and it was ‘to come and see us people who are living like we are in a Third World country’. He went on to say that in East Timor, the Solomon Islands and even Afghanistan they did not lose power as often as he does at his home just 20 minutes south of Townsville.

The Energy Queensland annual report 2022-23 shows that electricity prices for Ergon’s residential customers increased by a whopping 28.7 per cent in that financial year and that more than half of the households were highly concerned that they may not be able to afford their electricity bill. That same report shows an almost 80 per cent increase to more than 10,000 guaranteed service level payments due to a lack of network reliability, despite a reduction in both peak and minimum demand. The minister refers to planned outages and upgrades, while the mayor of Townsville pays her dues to the Labor Party with mock outcry. Meanwhile, my constituents are told by Ergon that the problem lies at a substation—a substation that Ergon requested funding to replace, only to be denied by this government. The minister’s statement to the *Townsville Bulletin* published on 2 February when referring to reliability issues went on to say, ‘Politics shouldn’t come into it.’ If the information provided to my constituents by Ergon is correct, the minister is wrong because it is the minister who has ultimate responsibility. The minister said, ‘Ergon sparkies and engineers were already in the process of planning and delivering these upgrades.’

In reality, it seems that those sparkies and engineers have been let down by this minister in the same way that the residents of Alligator Creek, Nome, Julago, Cungulla and Elliot Springs have been left with an electricity supply akin to the Third World. Today, I call on the minister to come clean. Was a request for funding to upgrade the substation at Stuart made? If so, who rejected that request? My constituents deserve reliable electricity and they also deserve the truth. We are sick and tired of the constant power outages. We are sick and tired of the excuses. It is about time this government stepped up to the plate and delivered reliable power to these areas.