




Speech By
Bryson Head

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 1 May 2025

GOVERNANCE, ENERGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (3.31 pm): It is always a pleasure to talk about energy in this House. I thank the chair of the committee for his earlier contribution and the committee for their consideration of this audit report. The report looked at a period when there were many energy failures in the state. The audit report spoke about profits from government owned corporations and coal-fired power stations coming to the state. Let us paint a picture of the previous government's motives and what they forced those government owned corporations to do and what the result has been for the state. We have a government that took hundreds of millions of dollars of returns to shareholders—in fact, \$986 million—across CleanCo, CS Energy and Stanwell. I do not have the exact figures for the dividends that CS Energy had to pay from the Callide Power Station, but many reports have—

Mr Crandon: In the order of \$500 million.

Mr HEAD: I take that interjection from the member for Coomera and the chair of the committee: \$500 million in dividends taken out of CS Energy. In that same period, we had a Brady report that has painted a damning picture of a lack of maintenance and a lack of investment in a coal-fired power station in the electorate of Callide that resulted in several incidents over the last few years. We know from the Brady report—and the former minister who is in the chamber would be well aware of this—about the blowouts, the failures and the cover-up that led to that being before the courts. I understand the minister said yesterday in the order of \$34 million—I think that is what he said—was spent in legal fees to try to hide that report which painted this picture of failures of investment into that asset.

As a result of that asset being down for extended periods of time in Queensland, power prices were jacked up, and that has been referred to many times. The former Labor government try to pat themselves on the back for handing out energy rebates. They have taken dividends from a coal-fired generator that has been struggling to stay operational because of a lack of maintenance, and they have forced that upon that power plant. They have given Queenslanders some money and said, 'Here you go, everyone. We're being really nice,' but in doing that the power plant has failed and the power prices for people in Queensland have been jacked up. That is another failure of the former Labor government. Those opposite have their heads down now because they know their record on energy in Queensland is appalling.

The Deputy Premier spoke about workplace incidents that have happened there. Many of the employees at Callide Power Station talk to me regularly and they have said that they very much appreciate the new direction of this LNP government in delivering a fresh start for Queensland because we are going to invest the money that they have been asking for for many years. The former Labor government say they are a party for the workers but since I have been here I have not seen the evidence of that.

Mr Stevens: Not the blue-collar workers.

Mr HEAD: Certainly not the blue-collar ones; I take that injection. We had the opposition leader in here yesterday trying to say we were putting the blame of a recent incident on low-level workers. It is clear through the Treasurer and Minister for Energy that we are holding the senior management of Callide to account over their failures that are well known in this place.

The Auditor's report also speaks about renewable energy targets, pumped hydro and CleanCo. Another thing the former Labor government did not want to tell us ahead of the election was the cost of Pioneer-Burdekin. It was about \$12 billion or \$14 billion, then it was \$24 billion and then it was \$28 billion. We were trying to get an honest answer before the election, but those opposite would not tell us what it was going to cost Queensland taxpayers.

Mr Crandon: \$37 billion.

Mr HEAD: I take that interjection from the member for Coomera; that pumped hydro system was meant to cost Queenslanders \$37 billion. If you think that would not jack up electricity prices in Queensland, you would be dreaming, or paying higher taxes, which is another thing a Labor government loves forcing upon Queenslanders.