

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Government Energy Reforms to Hit Regional and Remote Communities Hard.

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The Queensland Government has announced plans to sell 33 power stations in regional and remote communities to the private sector and review the Community Service Obligation (CSO) payment which ensures consumers pay the same prices for power regardless of where they live in Queensland.

The mooted sale will mean communities from Birdsville, Bamaga, Barcaldine and the Torres Strait will have their power stations privatised and their over 160 jobs outsourced.

The moves come as part of energy reforms as the Government tries to grapple with skyrocketing electricity prices but ironically will have the exact opposite effect.

The Services Union Acting Secretary Jennifer Thomas said, "Many of the areas affected are remote indigenous communities these changes will drive up prices and only add to electricity to the list of over priced goods and services where consumers in remote and regional communities pay way over the odds."

"These reforms will only create uncertainty for regional Queensland over the price and reliability of electricity. The Government should immediately guarantee to regional Queensland that they will be no worse off after the Government's reforms."

In a further potential blow to regional Queensland the Government has announced that it is going to overhaul the Community Service Obligation payment which ensures tariffs in regional areas are the same as those in metropolitan areas.

"This could mean eventually communities in regional areas will pay more for power than metropolitan areas" said Ms Thomas.

"Currently in Queensland there is no difference between regional and metropolitan tariff rates because the Government makes up the difference for the extra cost involved in bringing electricity to the bush. If this is changed then we will have a two tier system such as Victoria where it is 17% more expensive if you live outside of metropolitan areas. In New South Wales it's a whopping 21% more expensive for regional communities."

"The Newman Government has proven it only cares about the South East corner and is happy to deliver higher electricity prices to regional Queensland in order to fill the pockets of their big business mates in the private sector."

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