



Greg Piper, MP
Member for Lake Macquarie



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ANTI-PRIVATISATION PETITION TAKES OFF

Privatisation of the State's power stations and the retailing of electricity is opposed not only by the union movement in fear for their jobs, but a large majority of people State-wide, according to Greg Piper, Member for Lake Macquarie.

"I only launched my petition against privatisation a couple of weeks ago and my office has been inundated with signatories from as far afield as Sydney, who have nothing to do with power stations, but simply fear the privatisation of this important utility", Mr Piper said.

Since the government's announcement to sell the power grid for \$15 billion was made late last year, Mr Piper has consistently opposed the move on both economic and environmental grounds.

"Not only will jobs go and electricity become more expensive after the government's honeymoon period when the monopoly really sets in, but our environment will suffer enormously", Mr Piper said.

He believes that with climate change resulting from coal-fired power stations, the last thing we need to meet the increased demand for power over the next decade is more of what he calls the "old, dirty, technology" that a dollar driven industry will offer.

"Sure we need the coal-fired stations to provide our present base load, but we also need the government to spend some of its \$1.2 billion a year from power retailing on new solar, gas and wind technologies", he said.

Mr Piper said that we have already lost to China and America what has proven to be the world's most efficient solar technologies, along with their innovative Australian scientists, and that only a State-funded power industry can develop alternative energy.

"Emma and Costa just can't wait to get their hands on \$15 billion to buy their way into another term of government", he said.

Mr Piper has been asked to outline his views at tonight's public forum at Newcastle Panthers which starts at 6pm.