



Greg Piper, MP
Member for Lake Macquarie



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Government Short Circuited on Privatisation

Today saw a very unsatisfactory conclusion to an appalling process according to Greg Piper, Member for Lake Macquarie, who has campaigned extensively against privatisation

“The good news is that with today’s adjournment in the upper house and the Government’s fear of losing numbers in the lower house, the privatisation bills appear where they belong – dead in the water” Mr Piper said.

Mr Piper said he had serious concerns about selling a profitable State asset, but even greater concerns about the State abrogating its environmental responsibilities.

“We have some of Australia’s biggest polluting generators here in the Hunter and Kevin Rudd’s emissions trading scheme is not the panacea for climate change” he said.

“A Government-owned power industry must ultimately respond to public pressure to develop clean, renewable energy, but private operators would have had no incentive to stop burning coal throughout their 99 year leases”, Mr Piper said.

According to Mr Piper there was absolutely nothing in the Electricity Industry Restructuring Bill or in the Auditor General’s report that enforced or even encouraged the use of sustainable energy.

“Not only was the Government proposal sold on spin and driven by bullying, it was centred around Mr Costa’s rubbery figures,” Mr Piper said.

“Treasurer Costa says the state needs \$15 billion for base load power, but the Owen Report states that we need only 10% more power, or one new power station, by 2013. This poses the question of why six state owned power stations would be sold for just \$10 billion if one new power station costs \$15 billion.”

“It appears that Premier Iemma’s war-chest for the next election and Treasurer Costa’s career will both suffer an economic shortfall,” Mr Piper said.

He said that if energy supply was the real issue, the Government would be inviting expressions of interest for a gas-fired power station on one its sites, rather than selling the farm.