



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

McMillan Electorate: Hazelwood Power Station

SPEECH

Thursday, 11 March 2010

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Page 2324
Questioner
Speaker Broadbent, Russell, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr BROADBENT (McMillan) (9.36 am)—Deputy Speaker, today I rise to draw to your attention and that of this parliament to the vile campaign by Environment Victoria to close down Hazelwood Power Station. Of course I stand in protection of my own working families, those that work at Hazelwood Power Station, those that are surrounded by Hazelwood Power Station and those that hang off all 500 of the people that work at Hazelwood Power Station. Environment Victoria has one simple aim, to close down Hazelwood Power Station, and they are running this campaign to do such a thing.

My mind is not closed, and never will be, to our need to address climate change and to clean up our power stations. I have been the member for McMillan in the past and I am its member today. I do not actually have the power stations in my electorate anymore, but I have the people that work in those power stations in my electorate at Moe. Because I care for those people, I like to keep an open mind about where we can head with the marvellous resource that is Victorian brown coal. I am reminded of the local government council candidate who says, ‘I will give you cheaper rates if you elect me.’ When elected, that local government councillor finds out that the potholes on the road, at the front gate of the farmer that elected him or her in the first place, have to be serviced by someone.

We as politicians and leaders in our community have to govern for the day, in the day. We cannot govern for what may be into the future. There are great opportunities in Latrobe Valley, particularly with changes to how we generate the power. To close down Hazelwood Power Station would cut off 20 per cent of Victoria’s power supply, which no government would ever allow anyway, because we have a growing community with greater needs and because we have greater opportunities for manufacturing. That has been the basis of our wealth for many years and will continue to be so in perpetuity. We have already cleaned up our act in Latrobe Valley, and we have to be open to how we can do better and where we will be in the future in regard to gasification of coal and how that can be introduced in existing plants or new plants that will be built.

There are great opportunities running into the future. I have said before in this House that we are locked into coal for the next 50 years. That does not mean there will not be opportunities for renewables, that there will not be opportunities for abatement or that there will not be opportunities in how we go about using that marvellous resource of brown coal into the next 10 or 20 years. That is why I stand today and say it is wrong to send money to Environment Victoria to help them run this campaign, which has the simplistic view that just closing down a power station will change the world forever. We need as a community to address the issues but to address them in such a way that we have a long-term viable future for our families and our future in the Latrobe Valley.