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Minister for the Environment and Energy

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SHORTEN KICKS ENERGY SECURITY “DOWN THE TRACK”

Bill Shorten and the Labor Party have again shown that they do not take Australia’s energy security seriously.

When asked whether he would support keeping coal-fired power stations open in light of projected electricity supply shortfalls in the future, Bill Shorten revealed that he would prefer to ignore the issue:

LANE: The Liddell Plant in NSW is slated for closure in 2022, would you support taxpayer money or incentives being used to extend the life of that plan?

SHORTEN: **I think that’s an issue for down the track...**

LANE: Sorry just to pick up, I'm sorry, AEMO points out there are going to be major supply issues around this summer, next summer, the next four to five years.

ABC AM, 7 September 2017

Bill Shorten’s negligence is obviously infecting his frontbench too, with his Energy Spokesman Mark Butler denying the official advice of the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO):

ALBERICI: Can you answer my question? I'm so sorry to keep pressing you. But would you consider...

BUTLER: **I don't accept the premise.**

ALBERICI: You don't accept the idea that to keep the lights open... You don't accept the premise that it was articulated in the AEMO report that there is going to be a shortfall?

BUTLER: **Yes**

ABC Lateline, 7 September 2017

This is the type of attitude, and the lack of planning from a state Labor government of 15 years, that led to a state-wide blackout in South Australia, putting 1.7 million people into the dark and costing more than half a billion dollars. Jay Weatherill pursued his “big experiment” without planning and when it failed miserably, Mark Butler called it a “hiccup”.

The Turnbull Government understands that planning and preparation are essential when it comes to our energy future. That’s why we commissioned AEMO to assess whether in the future there will be enough baseload, dispatchable power in the system – the first time a government has specifically done so.

While Mark Butler is in denial, AEMO has clearly advised that there is likely to be a 1,000 megawatt shortfall in 2022, when the Liddell Power Station is scheduled to close. That’s why the Turnbull Government commenced discussions with the owner of Liddell to discuss options for keeping it open longer.

Coal-fired power stations, be it Liddell or elsewhere in the National Electricity Market (NEM), are critical to maintaining the affordability and reliability of our energy system. A point underlined by the AEMO report and now recklessly dismissed by Bill Shorten and Labor.

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