

NOT 4 SALE

FS#11

The Truth Burns... Victoria's bitter pill



Jeff Kennett told Victorians that electricity privatisation would increase jobs and decrease prices. Twenty-odd years later, direct electricity network jobs have fallen from over 10,000 to 2,000, and electricity bills have skyrocketed.

After two decades of enormously increased prices by the private owners, electricity supply is less reliable and more expensive. Put simply, electricity privatisation in Victoria failed to deliver any of the benefits Victorians were told that it would.

Not only pricey, but deadly

The real costs of privatisation – something that has never entered the national electricity privatisation debate – are the lives lost from the cheap and nasty under-maintenance of the assets. The Black Saturday Bushfire Royal Commission found that the major fires, which led to the majority of deaths (119) that day, were due to poor maintenance of powerlines.

The power companies responsible for the fires and deaths have been rewarded with higher power prices and profits. The living victims, now in their fourth year of legal claims, are being 'vigorously opposed' by a small army of power company lawyers.

'This is not acceptable', said Victorian ETU Secretary, Troy Gray. 'Victorians are being treated with contempt by the private providers of what is an essential service. No other Australians should be subject to the risks and costs that we face in Victoria.

Victorian ETU's warning to other States

The Victorian Branch is committed to helping the other States and Branches of the ETU that are threatened by privatisation to learn the real facts about what happens after the sale of networks.

'The theories used to justify privatisation of the electricity in Victoria were just wrong. We suspected as much at the time, but now the facts should speak for themselves,' he said.

The Victorian Branch have engaged eminent economist, Professor John Quiggin, to undertake a study to show how much more Victorians are paying as a consequence of privatisation and according to Mr Gray the study will look at the real losses being seen in Victoria.

'What we want to know – and what Australians in other States should have the right to know – is how much worse-off Victorians are from having sold control of and revenues from electricity', said Troy Gray.

'John Quiggin is one of Australia's most respected academic economists internationally,' he added. 'We are very fortunate to have somebody of Professor Quiggin's eminence to undertake the study.

'We've seen what happens to electricity jobs, prices and network deterioration under privatisation. We have a duty to share the hard evidence of those costs with our interstate comrades who are leading the fight against further sell-offs.' The Victorian Branch has also produced a short video to highlight the real impacts on jobs, communities and safety.

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Our Power Assets are Not4Sale...Not Now...Not Ever.