A Tim Nicholls-led Liberal National Government will facilitate the development of a baseload, low emissions coal-fired power station in North Queensland.

The Problem
It currently costs more than twice as much to deliver electricity to Townsville compared with Gladstone. A major study by Townsville Enterprise determined a coal-fired power station in North Queensland would put strong downward pressure on electricity prices. Reliable and affordable baseload electricity is essential for key LNP economic drivers such as the agriculture, manufacturing and resources industries.

There are currently nine coal-fired power stations in Queensland, the most northern of them at Rockhampton – 600km from Townsville. North Queensland is missing out on affordable and reliable electricity and the jobs, industry and opportunity that come from a baseload power station.

Electricity prices have increased by more than 109 per cent over the last decade. Under Labor, electricity prices continue to rise. In fact, they’re at record highs.

Labor has ruled out a coal-fired power station in North Queensland, based purely on ideology and to secure Greens preferences in inner-city Brisbane seats.

Labor’s opposition is despite Australia’s Chief Scientist Dr Finkel, Townsville Enterprise and the Minerals Council of Australia all releasing independent reports that show electricity from coal-fired power stations is cheaper than renewables.

Our Record
The LNP’s energy policy has always been based on affordability and security, not ideology.

In government, the LNP:
• Froze the household Tariff 11 for one year, saving an average household $120
• Opposed the Carbon Tax, saving an average Queensland household $170 every year
• Reduced wasteful expenditure on network infrastructure – which would have increased electricity prices – by $7 billion
• Closed Labor’s Solar Bonus Scheme, which is expected to cost Queenslanders around $3.4 billion by 2028, and
• Maintained the Uniform Tariff Policy to ensure regional Queenslanders don’t pay more for electricity than people in south-east Queensland.

Our Real Plan
A Tim Nicholls-led LNP Government will facilitate the development of a coal-fired power station in North Queensland by fast tracking regulatory approvals.

The LNP’s Minister for State Development will designate a coal-fired power station built by a private proponent as a ‘prescribed project’. A prescribed project is one which is of significance, particularly economically and socially, to the state or a Queensland region.

The purpose of declaring a prescribed project is to overcome any unreasonable delays in obtaining regulatory approvals.

It enables the Coordinator-General, if necessary, to intervene in the approvals process in a number of ways to ensure timely decision-making for the prescribed project.

To learn more about Our Plan visit betterqueensland.org.au
Frequently Asked Questions

What is a ‘prescribed project’?
A prescribed project is one which is of significance, particularly economically and socially, to Queensland or a Queensland region.

In deciding whether to declare a prescribed project, the Minister may consider:

- public interest
- potential environmental effects, and
- other matters considered relevant.

The LNP know a coal-fired power station is economically significant to North Queensland.

What is a low emissions, coal-fired power station?
New ultra-supercritical black coal high efficiency low emission (HELE) power station produce 40 per cent less emissions than subcritical brown coal power stations.

Emissions can be reduced by up to 90 per cent with Carbon Capture and Storage technology.

HELE plants operate throughout the world, including in Germany, Italy, India, South Korea, Japan, Poland, Indonesia, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Slovenia, the United States, South Africa and China.

The number of supercritical and ultra-supercritical units is 1015, with a further 1231 planned or under construction.

Where will the coal for the power station come from?
Queensland has an abundance of coal. Our coal is some of the highest quality in the world. In 2010, it was estimated that Queensland had a coal (thermal and metallurgical) resource of about 34 billion tonnes. We currently export more than $23.5 billion of coal a year.

An independent study commissioned by Townsville Enterprise found a mine-mouth power station would be the most cost-effective option. This is where the power station is close to the coal it uses, such as in the Surat or Galilee Basins.

There is high demand for Queensland’s coking and thermal coals, which are low in ash and sulphur.

How much will the electricity cost?
A report by the Minerals Council of Australia found an ultra-supercritical coal-fired power station would produce electricity at $40-$78 per megawatt hour, compared with gas at $69-$115 and solar at $90-$171.

Australia’s Chief Scientist Dr Finkel also found that coal-fired electricity was cheaper than renewables.

Why isn’t the Government building the power station?
Queensland-owned electricity generators control about 65 per cent of the state’s generation capacity.

To boost competition and lower prices, any new generators in Queensland should be built, owned and operated by the private sector.