

MEDIA RELEASE



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Unions pledge support for National Party members following unanimous vote against privatisation of electricity network

Power industry unions have welcomed the support of rank and file National Party members following the unanimous decision of the party's State Conference in Bathurst last week to oppose the privatisation of the NSW electricity network.

Conference attendees — including National Party members from across NSW and National Party MP's — resolved unanimously to oppose any plans to sell the state's monopoly electricity network, saying that privatisation had failed to benefit the public in South Australia and Victoria.

The Electrical Trades Union and United Services Union welcomed the support of National Party rank and file members and pledged that power industry unions would work cooperatively with the National Party to ensure any push to privatise the states monopoly electricity network was stopped.

"National Party members from across NSW have sent a clear message to their parliamentary representatives, both Liberal and National, that electricity privatisation is bad for regional NSW and must be opposed," Unions NSW Deputy Assistant Secretary Adam Kerslake said.

"We welcome this overwhelming support from rank and file National Party members.

"It is refreshing to see common sense prevail on such an important issue as the privatisation of the state's electricity poles and wires.

"Over the coming months I look forward to getting around NSW to talk to National Party members and other locals so they know that they have the full support of the trade union movement when it comes to stopping the privatisation of our electricity network.

"By working together as a community we can not only stop bad policies such as this from becoming reality, but we can also protect local regional services and electricity consumers at the same time."

USU General Secretary Graeme Kelly said that power industry unions would now be looking to work with National Party MPs and their rank and file members in order to ensure the privatisation of the NSW electricity network does not become a reality.

“What we have seen is grass roots members stand up and say electricity privatisation will be bad for our regions, it will be bad for our communities and it will be bad for consumers,” Mr Kelly said.

“Power industry unions want to support the National Party rank and file on this issue wherever we can and we encourage Liberal Party members living in rural electorate to also stand up and be counted.

“While the National Party conference motion is not binding on National Party MPs, it does make it abundantly clear that party members living in rural and regional NSW do not want the state’s electricity networks privatised.

“It is now up to National Party MPs and their country Liberal colleagues to support their rank and file members and rule out any privatisation of our electricity network.”