

Can Regional Queensland businesses take another increase in power prices? Expressway Signs as a small to medium local business is struggling to make a profit anyway with high costs. If we have an increase in power prices, we will have no other choice but to either increase prices, which the signage market won't accept or reduce labour costs by reducing staffing levels. Any increase in price is detrimental to the businesses. A large part of our operating cost is electricity and the relentless increase in electricity cost makes operating unsustainable.

From the lowest power prices in the country in 2006-2007, Queensland has risen by more than 50 per cent above the national average (ABS data). The Australian Energy Regulator's state of the market report for 2015 says "Queensland was the only region to record an increase in prices. It also had the National Energy Market's most expensive wholesale energy prices for the first time in over a decade,". The government needs to target on the surplus capacity of the government owned generators and find other solutions to lower the wholesale power prices rather than increase burden on local businesses. More and more businesses are closing down shop in Cairns due to high costs and the local economy would not be able to withstand any more increases in cost.