

## **Electricity crisis another failure of the ANC-government**

Speech by **Kevin Mileham MP, DA Shadow Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy**

Chairperson,

It is often said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over, and expecting different results. That's what the ANC government has done with the electricity crisis in South Africa. They have wasted time and money on war rooms, commissions, committees and plans that only serve to preserve the status quo. They have rewarded the very same people who caused the problem with more power and influence. They have repeated the same empty promises – that loadshedding will end soon – without any evidence or action.

At what point does this madness end? At what point is the ANC government going to acknowledge that it has failed South Africa, our people and our economy?

The topic of today's discussion is "The Electricity Crisis in South Africa – What is to be done?". It's solutions focused. So let's look at how we address the issue.

The first solution must be to get rid of the incompetent and corrupt ANC government, that has mismanaged the electricity crisis from the very start. We need a capable, transparent and accountable government that can think outside the box and act fast to fix our energy shortfall. Fortunately, we have an excellent example of such a government, right here in the Western Cape, where the Democratic Alliance is building resilience and independence from ESKOM at a local and provincial level.

Where the DA governs, like in Cape Town, George, Stellenbosch, Kouga and Midvaal, the municipalities are aggressively pursuing their own sources of electricity, whether from own generation, independent power producers, or more recently, by allowing small scale embedded generators – essentially residential and commercial rooftop solar – to feed surplus electricity into the municipal distribution network and be paid for this at an attractive rate. Steps are being taken to make it easier for consumers to install their own generation, and to make it cheaper to do so. In Cape Town, for example, the municipality has done away with the requirement that grid-tied systems must be a "net consumer" of electricity.

**We need to open the doors to decentralized power generation.** This would necessitate investment in grid infrastructure and the rapid unbundling of the ESKOM monopoly – a process which appears to have stalled completely, despite more promises from the president and his cronies. We need to build transmission lines to our renewable energy resource rich areas – the Northern, Western and Eastern Cape – and rapidly convert our decommissioned coal plants in Mpumalanga and KZN, where we already have grid infrastructure, to renewable resources and other sources of generation.

**We need to fast track independent power production.** We can do this through red tape reduction, incentivizing investment, and allowing municipalities and businesses the space they need to procure electricity directly, without the big brother command and control mentality of ESKOM and NERSA. We need to be able to build generation where it is needed, not where it is convenient.

A key component of any future electricity infrastructure in South Africa is storage. We need to invest in large-scale electricity storage solutions to enable the integration of intermittent renewable energy sources like solar and wind into the grid. Energy storage can provide a more reliable and flexible energy supply, reducing the risk of blackouts and increasing grid stability. These technologies are rapidly improving and becoming more cost-effective, making them a viable option for large-scale deployment.

We need to address the massive gap in government's plans – such as they are. Very little is being spoken about or done to implement and enhance demand management. The National Solar Water Heater programme has been stalled for years, and is costing the country hundreds of millions in storage fees. The roll-out of energy-efficient lighting has come to a grinding halt. Little is being done to encourage consumers to conserve electricity. The time has come for some bold messaging in this regard, and an aggressive campaign for energy efficiency. We need to manage the electricity we do have, better. By encouraging citizens and businesses to adopt energy-efficient practices, we can reduce the demand for electricity and lessen the burden on the power grid.

I have previously pointed out that the 2019 Integrated Resource Plan was out of date the minute it was gazetted. Despite promises from President Ramaphosa and Minister Mantashe, we are still using this inaccurate and problematic document as the basis of our electricity planning. South Africa needs a new IRP **now**, not in three years time! And it needs to be realistic! We cannot afford to buy in to the misguided pronouncements of the ESKOM board that they will achieve an Energy Availability Factor of 60% by the end of March 2023, when they can barely hit 50% in mid-March and show little likelihood of improvement in the near future!

**We must prioritize the maintenance and upgrading of existing electricity infrastructure.** This will ensure that our electricity supply is reliable and efficient, and can meet the needs of our growing population. As part of this, it is vital that we secure our cables, substations and transformers. The SAPS cannot be permitted to stand idly by and watch as cable theft occurs in front of their very police stations! At the same time, we need to protect our electrical workers and contractors. In a horrific incident last week, 4 electrical contractors were killed by vigilantes who thought they were cable thieves. This cannot continue!

Where the DA governs, we have taken a comprehensive and forward-thinking approach to solving the electricity crisis. We have shown that we have practical solutions that reduce the impact of loadshedding. We believe that by promoting independent power producers and renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, and using technology to manage our energy system, we can build a more sustainable and reliable energy system that benefits all South Africans. But we know that we cannot do this alone. We need the support and cooperation of our fellow South Africans, and we need a national government that is committed to building a more sustainable and reliable energy system for all. We can continue down the path of insanity, or we can choose a new path – a path that leads to real solutions and a brighter future for all South Africans. In 2024, let's turn the lights back on. Let's vote for a DA national government!