

~~It is clear that Queensland's electricity system is under stress. A big part of the problem we are facing is that the former government gold plated the network. Many people are also using less electricity as a result of new technology, but the poles, wires and other equipment still need to be paid for. The cost of environmental schemes such as the solar bonus scheme, carbon tax and renewable energy schemes are compounding the problem. Greater competition is only one part of the answer. The reforms the Newman government is delivering will build a solid foundation for the electricity industry to support Queensland's people and economy. All Queenslanders have a role in creating our future and, unless we all take charge of the way we buy and use electricity, prices will continue to rise. The bill I am introducing today will encourage retailers to offer more flexible products at the best price and enable Queenslanders to benefit from the exciting changes ahead for the electricity sector. I commend the bill to the House.~~

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First Reading

~~**Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (12.09 pm): I move—~~

~~That the bill be now read a first time.~~

~~Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.~~

~~Motion agreed to.~~


~~Bill read a first time.~~

Referral to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee

~~**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee.~~

<NATIONAL ENERGY RETAIL LAW (QUEENSLAND) BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (12.10 pm): I present a bill for an act to establish a national energy customer framework for the regulation of the retail supply of energy to customers, to make provision for the relationship between the distributors of energy and the consumers of energy, to amend this act, the Electricity—National Scheme (Queensland) Act 1997 and the National Gas (Queensland) Act 2008 for particular purposes, and for other purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Bill 2014.

Tabled paper: National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Bill 2014, explanatory notes.

The bill establishes the national energy customer framework for the regulation of the sale and supply of electricity and gas to consumers. The bill also amends the framework to ensure the arrangements are the best for Queensland. It amends the Electricity—National Scheme (Queensland) Act 1997 and the National Gas (Queensland) Act 2008 for particular and other purposes. This bill, together with the Electricity Competition and Protection Legislation Amendment Bill, represents further reform to Queensland's electricity sector. The government agreed to implement the national energy customer framework in Queensland as part of its response to the Interdepartmental Committee on Electricity Sector Reform. For the past two years, the Newman government has set about implementing the recommendations of the Interdepartmental Committee on Electricity Sector Reform to correct our electricity system. This bill will support the reform strategy to maximise the benefits of competition, while protecting consumers. The bill will also enhance the outcomes of other reforms, including the move to market monitoring in the south-east, contained in the Electricity Competition and Protection Legislation Amendment Bill.

As I mentioned, the bill contains clauses to give effect to the national energy customer framework. NECF is the consumer protection framework for consumers of electricity and gas. The government agreed to implement NECF as a key means for better protecting customers and driving retail market competition. The framework does this in three key ways. Firstly, it enhances protections and support, certainly for those struggling with their bills. For example, it will compel retailers to comply with hardship policies designed to help customers to manage their bills on an ongoing basis.

Secondly, it provides better tools to help customers to compare offers in the market and obtain a better deal. Thirdly, it makes it easier for new retailers to enter the Queensland market. Retailers will not have to apply for state based retail authorisations, and will instead rely on a single national authorisation. The package will be altered to provide more support to regional Queenslanders and to better support sector outcomes. For example, regional Queensland provisions will support the continued delivery of the uniform tariff policy. The Queensland parliament, however, will retain the power to oversee and vary the national energy customer framework if required. The legislation will be reviewed by 1 January 2018 to examine the framework's effects.

As noted in relation to the Electricity Competition and Protection Legislation Amendment Bill, it is clear that Queensland's electricity sector is in stress. Greater competition in the market and increased consumer protections enabled by this bill, together with other sets of reforms, will give a solid foundation for the energy industry to support Queensland's people and economy. I commend the bill to the House. >

First Reading

Hon. MF McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (12.13 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee.

~~<PUBLIC GUARDIAN BILL~~

~~FAMILY AND CHILD COMMISSION BILL~~

~~CHILD PROTECTION REFORM AMENDMENT BILL~~

~~Public Guardian Bill, resumed from 20 March (see p. 826), Family and Child Commission Bill resumed from 20 March (see p. 828) and Child Protection Reform Amendment Bill resumed from 20 March (see p. 831).~~

~~Second Reading (Cognate Debate)~~



~~**Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.14 pm): I move—~~

~~That the bills be now read a second time.~~

~~I thank the Health and Community Services Committee for its timely consideration of the Public Guardian Bill 2014, the Family and Child Commission Bill 2014 and the Child Protection Reform Amendment Bill 2014, a suite of bills that comprises the initial stage of the government's reforms to revitalise and refocus the child protection system in Queensland. The committee tabled its report on each of these bills on 13 May 2014. I now table the government's responses to the committee report on the Public Guardian Bill 2014.~~

~~Tabled paper: Health and Community Services Committee report No. 46 on the Public Guardian Bill 2014 Queensland, government response.~~

~~I take the opportunity to thank those people and organisations that assisted the committee in its consideration of the bills by appearing at the public hearings or making written submissions. The committee has made two recommendations in relation to the Public Guardian Bill and sought clarification on one issue. The government welcomes the committee's first recommendation that the bill be passed and the government, of course, accepts its recommendation.~~