



STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

Members present:

Mr DF Gibson MP (Chair)
Mr MJ Hart MP
Mr MJ Crandon MP
Mr R Katter MP
Ms KN Millard MP
Hon. TS Mulherin MP
Mr BC Young MP

Staff present:

Ms E Pasley (Research Director)
Ms M Telford (Principal Research Officer)
Ms M Westcott (Principal Research Officer)

PUBLIC BRIEFING—INQUIRY INTO THE NATIONAL ENERGY RETAIL LAW (QUEENSLAND) BILL 2014 AND THE ELECTRICITY COMPETITION AND PROTECTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2014

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 4 JUNE 2014

Brisbane

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Committee met at 9.30 am

BARR, Mr Benn, Acting Deputy Director-General, Energy, Department of Energy and Water Supply

FINDLAY, Ms Kristen, Manager, Pricing, Department of Energy and Water Supply

JACKSON, Ms Kate, Manager, Consumer and Retail, Department of Energy and Water Supply

TAYLOR, Ms Ty, Director, Consumer and Retail, Department of Energy and Water Supply

CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. I declare open the public briefing for the committee's inquiry into the National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Bill 2014 and the Electricity Competition and Protection Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 and I thank everyone for their attendance here today. I am David Gibson, the member for Gympie and the chairman of this committee. The other committee members here today are: the Hon. Tim Mulherin, the member for Mackay and deputy chair; Mr Michael Hart, the member for Burleigh; Mr Bruce Young, the member for Keppel; Ms Kerry Millard, the member for Sandgate; Mr Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera; and we will be joined shortly by Mr Rob Katter, the member for Mount Isa.

This briefing is being broadcast live via the parliamentary services website and a transcript will be made by the Hansard reporters and published on the committee's website. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask that representatives speak clearly into the microphones and state their full names.

The aim of the briefing today is for the committee to gather preliminary information in relation to the bills. The briefing is a formal committee proceeding and, as such, you should be guided by schedule 8 of the standing orders, of which a copy has been provided to you. I welcome the representatives of the Department of Energy and Water Supply. Mr Barr, would you care to make an opening statement?

Mr Barr: Thank you very much, Chair and committee members, for giving us this opportunity today to brief you on both bills. The bills are an important part of the government's overall electricity reform agenda. The underlying policy rationale for the legislation is to remove the barriers to competition in South-East Queensland and to open up the retail market for electricity to more competition and innovation. This will ultimately benefit consumers by providing greater choice, as well as better customer service and price outcomes. The legislation also applies the National Energy Customer Framework in Queensland to improve customer protections, reduce the regulatory burden on retailers and drive greater market efficiencies in both electricity and gas.

The Electricity Competition and Protection Legislation Amendment Bill provides for the introduction of a market monitoring regime in South-East Queensland. It includes consequential amendments to support the application of the National Energy Customer Framework or NECF. The move to market monitoring is designed to place extra pressure on retailers to offer better prices and enable customers to exercise better choice in the way they use and pay for electricity. Competition is working in South-East Queensland now because customers can get offers better than the regulated price, but there is more that can be done by removing prescriptive regulation to encourage greater flexibility and price choice for customers. A key step to that is removing the barriers to competition in South-East Queensland such as price regulation. In the longer term, this should drive a more efficient market and is expected to place downward pressure on prices. Customers outside South-East Queensland will still have access to regulated prices set by the Queensland Competition Authority and there is more work to be done to introduce competition into regional Queensland.

To facilitate the moves to market monitoring in South-East Queensland, the Electricity Competition and Protection Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 contains a number of amendments to the Electricity Act. Firstly, the bill removes the existing ministerial power under section 90 of the Brisbane

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Electricity Act to set prices to standard retail customers in South-East Queensland from 1 July 2015. Secondly, as an additional customer safeguard, the bill inserts a limited reserve power that will allow the minister to reintroduce price regulation into South-East Queensland if competition is deemed to be ineffective. However, there are protections around that reintroduction, which is that a report needs to be done by an independent body that says competition is ineffective in South-East Queensland. Thirdly, new provisions have been inserted into the Electricity Act to enable the relevant minister to direct the Queensland Competition Authority to provide a written report on the operation of market monitoring in South-East Queensland. This report will provide information to consumers and the government on the effectiveness of market monitoring in South-East Queensland, including the price outcomes for customers. Customer protections are also an essential component of this package and the bill introduces a number of new protections for customers in South-East Queensland, including preventing retailers from raising the price of the standard retail contract more than once in the first year of the operation of market monitoring and preventing retailers from introducing new fees or charges when market monitoring is introduced into South-East Queensland. The bill also includes comprehensive consequential amendments to Queensland energy laws, particularly the Electricity Act and the Gas Supply Act, to support the introduction of the National Energy Customer Framework or NECF. These amendments remove duplication and ensure the remaining customer protections in Queensland energy legislation operate effectively.

I move to the second bill, which is the National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Bill or NECF. NECF is an applied law consumer protection framework for the sale and supply of electricity and gas to homes and businesses. It is an important precondition for the introduction of market monitoring. It will replace existing restrictions and obligations on retailers and move them to a national framework. The government agreeing to implement this framework mid last year is a key plank of improving customer protections in Queensland and cutting red tape for electricity retailers. Some of the benefits of the increased protections include a more integrated approach to protections for customers, including retailers' and distributors' responsibilities around financial hardship; a more fully developed approach to regulating and placing customer focused obligations on energy sellers who are not retailers, that is, on-sellers or shopping centres or retirement homes; clearer and more effective price comparison information so customers can know what sort of deal they are getting from electricity retailers; clearer processes and requirements for gas customers around billing and credit management; and a national connections framework that sets out clear processes about how you can be connected to the electricity network.

Competition will be enhanced in the introduction of NECF, as I said earlier, by removing the requirement for retailers to actually apply to be licensed in Queensland. That removes the regulatory barrier and allows retailers set up elsewhere in the national electricity market to operate in Queensland without effectively applying for a licence in Queensland. There will be consistent rules between electricity and gas for the first time in Queensland as well, which will also remove the regulatory barrier for retailers who are offering both products. The package will be applied in Queensland with a number of additional modifications as well to support regional and rural Queenslanders. Importantly, these are around ensuring that regional Queenslanders have access to a notified price, both for small and large customers.

There are also additional variations to ensure that customers have support for market monitoring in South-East Queensland. The key modification is ensuring that retailers have to inform customers in advance of any price notification before a change to their price occurs. That is currently not the case in Queensland. The applied law regime will still allow the Queensland Parliament to retain and oversee and vary the NECF, if needed. The legislation is also scheduled to be reviewed by 1 January 2018 to examine the framework's effects.

Overall, as I have mentioned, the intent of both bills is to improve competition, particularly in South-East Queensland in the first instance, and at the same time improve customer protections throughout Queensland. I will take any questions that the committee now has.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for that. I might start with the Electricity Competition and Protection Legislation Amendment Bill. You talked about market monitoring. I cannot help but draw the comparison to the role the ACCC has and its market monitoring role with regards to fuel pricing. There is a perception in the community that it has failed in that role with fuel prices and that, despite the fact that we have had numerous inquiries into it by the ACCC, it failed in its market monitoring role. For the benefit of the committee, can you outline what powers this market monitoring will have and how that varies from what the ACCC has within its powers to market monitor, particularly in the monitoring of the prices of fuel?

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Mr Barr: I think an important issue that I did not mention is that the government said before it introduced this legislation that there needs to be certain conditions met. One of them is that competition needs to be effective in Queensland. That comes to the heart of the fuel issue, that is, is there actually effective competition around that particular price? Although the bills have been introduced, we have said some of those preconditions have not been met yet. An important one is that the Australian Energy Market Commission is doing a review of competition throughout the national electricity market. That will say, through a number of indicators, whether they think competition in Queensland is at a level that it can support removing the regulation. They look at things such as switching rates between retailers, whether there are any institutional barriers between providers of electricity services or prices, whether customers have the information they need to actually get a good deal from particular consumers. That is the precondition, I guess. Before we get there, we need to ensure that the market will support competition.

When it comes in, there is an important role for two regulators and the government and a third body to ensure competition is occurring, rather than just one national body. I think an important part of this is that government is retaining an oversight role through the Queensland Competition Authority, an independent regulator but a Queensland regulator, which yearly will look at the price outcomes for Queenslanders and publish that report and say not only on the two types of contracts you can get, which is a standard contract which is the highest contract and on the market contract, and the bill provides the minister with the ability to re-regulate, I guess. He has a reserve power, if the QCA or a different regulatory body says competition is ineffective, to say, 'I will re-regulate'. You want to make sure that decision is at hand's length from the government as well, because you want to give certainty to industry players that there will not be an ad hoc decision to re-regulate. One of the benefits of removing the current system is that you want retailers to invest in the market, you want them to put more money into Queensland and you want better products and services. If there is a fear that, after 12 months and a particular view comes in that competition is not effective and the government re-regulates, you will not get that investment. That is why there is a definitive legislative trigger around that.

I am not au fait with the ACCC's powers around fuel monitoring, but we can look at that and get back to you about the differences between what we are proposing here and what the ACCC does in fuel. There are other regulators looking at this as well, as I said. The AER, which is actually part of the ACCC, the Australian Energy Regulator, will be looking at how retailers perform on hardship and on protections in Queensland. The Australian Energy Market Commission will be looking at those competition indicators. The department itself also has a role to look at those three regulators, report and provide advice to the government from a policy point of view, to say, 'The QCA has done a piece on price, the AMC has done a piece on competition and the AER has looked at how retailers are going in dealing with customers; what do we think is happening in the market?', and provide the government with some options along those lines.

CHAIR: Just to clarify, you talked about three bodies and the government being, I guess, the ultimate in the re-regulation. If we take that out and just look at the price monitoring, can you talk the committee through how that price monitoring will occur? If someone is concerned and says, 'We are 12 months into it and it has been agreed that there is competition in the market, but we are not seeing the savings that we expected. In fact, my electricity bill is still going up in price.' How will that work practically? Talk us through that.

Mr Barr: The Queensland Competition Authority will do a yearly report on price in particular. That report will provide detail of the price outcomes, so there will be visibility about where prices have gone over the introduction of market monitoring, both on standard and on market contracts. What we are imagining is that that then will be an input into whether the government chooses to do a report to say, 'Is competition effective?' So they would have to commission another report and go, 'I'm worried because the QCA has said price outcomes are bad, I'm worried because I have heard from the AMC that we don't think competition is going as well as it could. I am going to get either the Queensland Competition Authority or another regulator to do a report about specifically whether competition is effective in the south-east corner.' If that report said it was not effective, the minister could re-regulate. Does that answer your question?

CHAIR: Not quite. Let's assume the competition is recognised as being effective but there are increases in prices. We have accepted that the competition is there. All those reports say that the market is mature enough, strong enough and diverse enough. But Dave Gibson receiving his electricity bill says, 'This isn't right. This has increased far too dramatically. I want to lodge a complaint or I want to bring it to the attention of someone or I want to see the rationale as to whether these prices should be at the level they are dictated.'

Mr Barr: There are two parts to that. One is that there is a requirement that standard contracts need to be fair and equitable. So we are debating about who will actually monitor that. We will aim to get the Australian Energy Regulator to have a look at that and whether there can be any impost on those particular retailers if they are not fair and equitable. The other point is—and this is why it is actually about the competition—if you are with a retailer and there is market monitoring and you are unhappy with the price, the policy intent is that you change the retailer, and there will be more retailers offering you better products. You should use that report and the comparative product to get a better deal. Coming back to whether competition is effective, if there is a range of offers that suit you and you can get a 15 per cent discount with another retailer and you are not happy with your price, the intent is you will leave that retailer and get that better price. The overall policy intent is if there is a retailer who is charging too much, customers should leave and get a better deal.

CHAIR: You mentioned an impost with regard to the pricing. What would that be? Has that been determined?

Mr Barr: No.

CHAIR: I might open up to other committee members.

Mr MULHERIN: How will the wholesale cost of power that retailers purchase be set? Will it be set by the Queensland competition regulator, or is it the Australian energy market?

Mr Barr: Wholesale generation costs in South-East Queensland will not be set by either. So the market will determine that.

Mr MULHERIN: The Australian energy market will determine that?

Mr Barr: It is buying and selling of wholesale generation. So it is not like a generator sets the place; it is trade between suppliers and generators that will set that wholesale price. In regional Queensland the QCA will still do a pricing determination and come up with a figure for what the wholesale energy cost is. In South-East Queensland the market will determine what that price is. In regional Queensland the QCA will still make a determination.

Mr MULHERIN: These retailers do short-term and long-term contracts with power generators and they hedge. Do they try to get an annualised unit cost that they can then retail to the consumer? Is that how it works?

Mr Barr: It depends on the retailer's business model as well. Some retailers just buy from the wholesale market. So they might buy from Queensland generators. Others, like AGL, are what we call integrated businesses; they own their own generation. They will offer different sorts of products. Most retailers we talk to like to set their prices once a year on their standard offers but then be more innovative around what they call their market contract. They might try to win business. They will offer you a better deal for 12 months to try to win your business. Does that answer your question?

Mr MULHERIN: It is probably an average cost, but what is the current wholesale cost?

Mr Barr: I think it is about \$60 per megawatt hour. I did bring some facts and figures which I can have a quick look at. I think it is \$60 per megawatt hour, roughly.

Mr MULHERIN: Have you modelled where it is likely to go in the future?

Mr Barr: We have not done that modelling. There are a number of economic firms that model wholesale energy costs. The QCA in their report said there were reasons to be hopeful that electricity prices would stabilise in the future. One of the great unknowns in that, though, is wholesale electricity costs. If you take carbon out, they are probably at historic lows. So they could go up in the foreseeable future, but I could not tell you how far they would go up by.

Mr MULHERIN: Have you modelled what impacts these reforms will have on the price paid by consumers?

Mr Barr: No. One of the reasons we have not is that long-term price outcomes is what the reform is about, not short-term price outcomes. It is more than about price outcomes as well. We have been very clear that this is one part of the puzzle around price outcomes, but certainly network costs, green schemes—there is a whole range of other cost drivers. Competition will place competitive pressure on price, but it is not the only reason you go to competition. You go to competition to improve customer service, to improve the range of choice of products in the market as well and to allow the consumer to get a better deal. The difficulty with modelling that is that the standard offer price for a retailer in Queensland might rise by five per cent from next year, for example, but you could get a 15 per cent to 20 per cent discount on a market contract which you are not able to get in Queensland at this moment in time. At the heart of the reform is engaging the customer to get that better deal.

Mr MULHERIN: Where do the savings to the consumer come from if the wholesale price of electricity remains the same? Does the money come out of cost cutting by retailers? What sort of costs can they cut? Is it staffing or customer service?

Mr Barr: The savings for the customer come from the competitive pressure that allows a new entrant retailer to take on an existing retailer and offer a better product and take risk in doing that. It does not impact on the cost build-up—the costs for a particular retailer, for example. Network costs are a straight pass through, largely wholesale costs are a straight pass through and there is the profit that retailers make on particular customers. In the QCA report there is a thing called head room and retail operating costs with the idea being you need those in a regulated market to allow competition to occur. When you do not have a regulated price, the regulator is not coming up with that amount and so the market will determine how much they can discount to win particular share. So you as a customer have a better range of offers rather than two large incumbent players in the market offering you a kind of vanilla sort of market contract.

Mr MULHERIN: Can you guarantee that the prices will come down for consumers?

CHAIR: I do not think that question is fair.

Mr Barr: No. That—

CHAIR: Do not answer that question. It is a hypothetical. No-one can guarantee anything.

Mr MULHERIN: What sort of impacts will this policy have on concessions paid to seniors?

Mr Barr: The government is having a look at the concessions framework as part of its overall reform package. It has not finalised that particular piece of policy work.

Mr MULHERIN: How many retailers are there currently in the SEQ market?

Mr Barr: I think there are about 11 retailers, but that is registered retailers. How many of them are actually actively targeting new customers I would suggest is less than that. What you want to do is encourage people like EnergyAustralia, who do not have a lot of market share, or Alinta, who is not targeting small customers in Queensland, to target small customers.

Mr MULHERIN: How many more retailers do you think will enter into the market following the passage of this legislation?

Mr Barr: I am not sure. You would want more retailers, but again, if you had better competition and more targeting of small customers from existing retailers that would be just as successful as two new retailers entering the market.

Mr MULHERIN: If the wholesale price remains the same, the network charges are the same, you say the competition will come by the introduction of different products? So we will see a lot more different tariff schedules that customers can sign up to? Does that mean delaying your evening meal for a cheaper power rate? That is where it is going to come from, isn't it? It is about managing the peak demand load.

Mr Barr: That could happen, and if you want to sign up to that, that is good for you, that is an effective part of the competition. However, if you do not want to sign up for that and you want a simpler product, a flat rate tariff, the market should be offering you that as well. Part of the reform is greater choice but, at the same time, customers need to be able to access that greater choice in a simple way. There are various ways we are going to go about making sure customers can simply get the information they need. One is using a national website called Energy Made Easy where you can go in, put in some details and work out the best deal for you. Then another is also working with the NGOs in Queensland about getting information out to disadvantaged groups about how they can get the best deals for themselves as well.

Mr MULHERIN: You spoke earlier about the minister's reserve powers with the reintroduction of price control. What are the specific triggers for the department to provide a report to the minister to consider the reintroduction of specific price control?

Mr Barr: The department would have to view that competition was ineffective in South-East Queensland and then we would have to commission an independent report to look at it.

Mr MULHERIN: What would be the triggers to say—

Mr Barr:—that competition is ineffective?

Mr MULHERIN: Yes.

Mr Barr: There is a range of KPIs that we will probably pick and take from the Australian Energy Market Commission. They look at—

Mr MULHERIN: Can you give us examples?

Mr Barr: Switching rates is one. Are there barriers to entry for new market entrants into the market? Customer understanding is one as well. The AMEC is surveying customers about whether they can actually enter the market or not. Kristen, do you have any others?

Ms Findlay: The uptake of standing contract offers verses market offers, there is a whole range of customer service indicators like call centre statistics, how they deal with complaints—

Mr Barr: Our intention is certainly to publish all of these. We are working through them now. Before the legislation goes through we will have the full suite.

CHAIR: For clarification where will you be publishing them?

Mr Barr: We will be putting them on the departmental website.

Mr MULHERIN: There will be certain specific triggers that will trigger that report to the minister. Then what are the triggers in that report that the minister will have to be satisfied in order to reintroduce the controls?

Mr Barr: It is really the report saying, 'We don't think competition is effective for the consumer in Queensland,' and looking at those particular KPIs and saying for whatever reason, whether on a price outcome or on a product outcome, competition is not delivering for the consumer in Queensland. You will have to look at those particular KPIs, get an independent report to him, and that independent report will either say yes, competition is effective based on the KPIs or (b) it is not effective.

Mr MULHERIN: Do you have any long-term plans to extend the same deregulation to the Ergon Energy area?

Mr Barr: There are probably a few steps to go through. One is there is not really competition at all in regional Queensland for small customers. The first part of that would actually be looking at how to get competition in under a regulated price probably. The government is looking at how to get competition into regional Queensland.

Mr MULHERIN: What sort of work are you doing in that space?

Mr Barr: I guess the biggest issue is how the uniform tariff is paid in regional Queensland. The uniform tariff is currently paid to Ergon only. Ergon Retail cannot compete for customers because they get the uniform tariff payments. It would not be competitive to allow Ergon to compete with that money at a retail level. The government is looking at moving the subsidy, the uniform tariff, to the network side, which goes to the network business which would allow other retailers to offer the same prices as Ergon Retail. That kind of sounds easy if you say it quickly, but there is a lot of work to do to go through that to make sure that customers get value from that and also government, in terms of how much it subsidises, gets value as well.

Mr MULHERIN: How far off is the Ergon region from being able to support this sort of competition? Surely there would be towns like Townsville, Cairns, Mackay, Rocky—would they be able to support this competition? Mount Isa, Charleville, Longreach and those places you could understand are not in that position.

Mr Barr: This is certainly something you have to consider. Because it is Energex and Ergon at this moment in time, it is done across the rest of the state. You could look at an isolated network, which is probably easier to split out than the rest of Ergon's network—what we call those connected to the national electricity grid. That would probably be the first port of call. Once you get to the isolated areas, which is Torres Strait Island, really far west, it becomes very difficult.

But that work itself will take a while. We do not have a date at this moment in time that we can say, 'This is the intent for the introduction of competition in regional Queensland', but certainly competition is the goal of government in everything we are doing around the electricity sector reforms. We have got work streams working on this.

Mr MULHERIN: Those bolt supply contracts with mining companies, they could be with Ergon and they could be with other—

Mr Barr: Yes.

Mr MULHERIN: If they were left in that Ergon network, would that have enabled a transition to a competitive market earlier if it was considered part of the whole demand for that region? If you look at Central Queensland, Mackay and Rocky, you have got a huge mining load there, but that has been stripped out of the Ergon regulated business. If that had been left in or if it is left in, would that lead to the transition to a competitive market a lot earlier for small retail customers?

Mr Barr: I don't think so, and again I will go away and have a think about it. But the reason is the way prices are calculated for small customers are different to large customers: small customers have to pay more for their poles and wires because they go to their houses. Large customers pay more wholesale energy costs, transmission costs; whereas small customers pay more of the poles and wires that go to individual houses. That is the big cost.

Mr MULHERIN: It is like going to the hardware store and I buy six bolts and nuts and you buy 100, so I pay the same price.

Mr Barr: So off the top of my head—and I will have to think about it—my answer would be 'no'.

Mr YOUNG: You want people to shift from one retailer to the next, but is there going to be any reform or standardisation on the penalties for moving? Is that going to happen? Hypothetically you could have a cheap power supply here, the kilowatt hours could be down, but they say they will offset it with a high termination or exit price.

Mr Barr: It is certainly something that we have looked at as part of this work. One of the amendments that we have in the bill is they cannot introduce new fees and charges in the introduction. Certainly when we have spoken to people like St Vincent de Paul and QCOSS, they are concerned whether people do understand the contracts and those fees and charges. We have also looked at whether you should pay any exit fees, and I guess the view is if you banned exit fees on market contracts, you would drive up the overall price. Retailers use exit fees to manage their risk, I guess. So if you take that away, the unit price has to go up a little bit. We would hope that if you do not want a contract with an exit fee, there are retailers who will offer that. And there are retailers now in Queensland who do, but the market should drive those contracts to what customers want. So I know Origin and a number of the small retailers now have products that if you do not want to pay an exit fee, there is no exit fee for you.

Mr YOUNG: I am going to test your mathematics now, Benn. Sixty dollars a megawatt hour, does that equate—

Mr Barr: I said that was my guess though.

Mr YOUNG: Let's bring it back to a kilowatt hour and it would be 6c, wouldn't it?

CHAIR: Take that one on notice.

Mr Barr: I will take that on notice. I do not have my pricing person here.

Mr YOUNG: I think we remove some zeros, don't we? You say you have to advise customers of a price change. Is there a time frame for advising them if you are going to implement a price change? Is it one month?

Mr Barr: I think it is 14 days; is that right? Yes.

Mr YOUNG: Fourteen days is not a lot.

Ms Jackson: The advance notice is that the customer has to be told in advance, but we are not actually specifying how closely in advance that is. So some retailers will be able to tell customers earlier; others, it might be closer to the time that their price change actually occurs. But the important thing is that it happens in advance.

CHAIR: So there's not a minimum time in advance?

Mr Barr: No.

CHAIR: If we take the worst case scenario, I could hear about a price increase at five o'clock today that takes effect tomorrow?

Mr Barr: Correct. Which is an improved protection from what you have now, I guess. The reason for the flexibility—

CHAIR: That makes me feel very comfortable, Mr Barr.

Mr Barr: We did look about specifying a time, but the reason is that you do not want to drive additional costs into retailers either. They came back and said, 'Look, we actually don't like it because it's a pain for us, but if you give us flexibility then we can do it in billing cycles. So we can do it on the previous bill; we can do it by email.' Most of it is automated from their point of view, so it reduces their cost. So on balance we have gone for something that gives them flexibility, but the customer can still ring up the next day and go, 'I'm out. I would like to leave and go to another retailer.'

CHAIR: Did you look at legislating on billing cycles? Because to me, if they are already doing it, it sounds like a very sensible way to say whatever your billing cycle is—

Mr Barr: The next bill.

CHAIR:—the next bill you are advised. So you go, ‘Okay, I’m on a three monthly, I’m on a monthly, you know, I have that full information.’ Did you look at that as a—

Mr Barr: Yes, we looked at a variety of options: whether you force the previous bill; whether you give them a particular time. I guess again we landed on reducing the cost to the retailers because ultimately those costs will flow through to customers.

Ms Jackson: Can I just also clarify that the advance notice is really just for the market retail contracts. There is a time frame for advance notice for standard retail contracts.

CHAIR: What is that time frame?

Ms Jackson: Ten business days beforehand they need to publish the price change and they need to inform the Australian Energy Regulator of the price change. They do not need to give sort of the individualised advance customer notice—we have not specified that time frame—but they do have to actually publish the information 10 business days in advance for the standard retail contract.

CHAIR: Don’t we risk having confusion with one standard contract having a notification and another type of contract not? To be brutally honest, I would not know whether I am on a standard or whether I am on a market one. Aren’t we risking confusion there in the marketplace with consumers by not being standard across the two?

Mr Barr: I guess the difference is if you are on a standard contract you have some additional protections, and one of those additional protections is the publication and the defining of the time. If you are on a market contract, you do have more flexibility around those particular conditions. On balance, we want retailers to offer different products that suit you. So if you want that particular notification and you want that, you stick to the standard contract. If there is a better deal for you, which might mean a retailer can tell you a week or three days in advance, then you take the better deal.

Mr CRANDON: Just following on from that, I have got to tell you that what you have just been talking about and describing to us puts fear into my heart, because we are talking about very simple people out there in the marketplace that struggle to understand any of these things. Let’s just tie two of the things that you have just said together: first, you are going to allow retailers to have exit fees; secondly, you are going to allow retailers to give you that much notice that your rates going up—you cannot pull out when there is an exit fee that you cannot jump over—and when you tie those two things together, there is no consideration.

Just before you go on with that, you are talking about sophisticated users of electricity understanding all of these things, and you have just heard from the Chair that he would not have a clue whether he is on this or that right now, and I have to tell you that I am in the same boat, and I would suggest to you that the majority of us would be in the same boat.

Mr YOUNG: Speak for yourself!

Mr CRANDON: That is why I said the ‘majority’ of us. I saw your bald head looking my way. Grow a beard!

CHAIR: It’s like when Telstra never advise you when they have a better deal than the deal you are on.

Mr CRANDON: Going on from that, now combine that with you making it easier for retailers to come into the market. I’m sorry; we have already had that with telecommunications companies that go belly up. Where are all the protections around these things? What you are talking about is just anarchy out there in the electricity market that is going to stitch up those people who are least able to protect themselves, in my view.

Mr Barr: Well, that exists and that is how the market operates now. You do not get any notification of a price change if you are on a market contract and there are exit fees, so that is how the South-East Queensland market operates now and is operating effectively. That is not to say that it could not do better, which is why we are introducing increased protections in this particular bill.

I guess the other thing is it is important that when we talk about customers understanding getting a better deal, it is about there are tools there and what you want. So if you are uncomfortable with an exit fee, there should be a product for you that doesn’t have an exit fee for you, and that product is a standard notified contract, which is there. If you want that, you have it now. You will have it under the reforms that are being introduced by these bills. In addition to that, there are additional protections in the bill for you.

Public Briefing—Inquiry into the National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Bill 2014 and the Electricity Competition and Protection Legislation Amendment Bill 2014

Reducing the number of retailers in the market or putting regulation in around price does not actually address issues around customer protection.

Mr HART: Would there be retailers in other states that might exist, especially big retailers that might be attracted to Queensland because of these changes?

Mr Barr: Yes, certainly that's the intent. I think it goes on two categories (1) there are large retailers in other states who are here, but not in a meaningful way; and (2) there are retailers in other jurisdictions that do not operate in Queensland who you would like to attract here. So when the Australian Energy Market Commission do their report in September about competition, it will be important that that report actually looks at whether Queensland is attractive for new entrant retailers and also whether existing retailers will increase competition and offer better services for customers in Queensland.

Mr HART: Those triggers and targets you mentioned before that you are going to publish on your website, is the QCA giving you that information, or is the department getting that information for itself and publishing it?

Mr Barr: We will be publishing what the KPIs will be. We won't be, like, these are the things that should be looked at, whether it is churn rates or barriers to entry. We won't be setting what they are. We will be getting an independent regulator, either the QCA or the AMC, to come up with that.

Mr HART: If the QCA comes back and says, 'We are not meeting those targets. This legislation requires a further report', why would you go back to the QCA again? Who else would we go to?

Mr Barr: We will go to the QCA. Under the legislation, the QCA only look at price movements. But the reforms are, as I said earlier, about more than price. So price is one outcome; there is customer service and competition in the market. So the reason you are not getting the QCA to do that is because there are other bodies that already look at those particular things. You do not want to duplicate the work that national bodies do, so you want to have a look at those particular kinds of inputs and then say, 'We are worried about it. We will do a specific report on it.'

What you do not want to have is the QCA doing an annual report on price monitoring which the entire market is worried means that you are going to re-regulate straightaway. You need to give them some certainty that there are some processes steps in that, otherwise you won't get investment in the market in Queensland.

Mr HART: Is there anybody else we could get to do that report?

Mr Barr: Other jurisdictions have looked at the Australian Energy Regulator doing it. That has been discussed. I am not sure that that is actually occurring in Victoria or South Australia at the moment. New South Wales is also moving to a price monitoring or a deregulated environment from 1 July this year, and I think they are getting their independent regulator IPART to do that for them.

Mr HART: Excuse my ignorance on this, but would that be something that you put out to tender or do you pay someone to do it? What is the process?

Mr Barr: At this juncture we would get—the Queensland Competition Authority is the economic regulator. It is important that you have an understanding of the retail electricity market in Queensland to be able to do that report. They have built that up over a number of years; they would be the ones to do it.

Mr HART: That criteria for the report to contain them.

Mr Barr: Yes.

Mr YOUNG: Understanding that the retailers are about 22 per cent of your bill and that network costs are about 44 per cent, one of the things that I see in the long term, because you said there are going to be about 11 players in the south-east corner, is that they are all going to determine what feed-in tariff they get from their solar to make it attractive for them. Have you considered long term? I can see it coming in where we are going to get people who are going to hook up batteries and disconnect altogether. Are we looking at that? Is that something that is on the horizon?

Mr Barr: Yes, there are a lot of people in the industry looking at the changes that have occurred through customers taking more ownership of their electricity. One of those is that we have a very high solar penetration in Queensland. Battery storage is the technology game changer. There is work that is being done both nationally and internationally about how does the system cope with that. The Queensland government is currently finishing a 30-year electricity strategy. Certainly, having a look at those disruptions to the supply chain is one of the key focuses of that piece of work.

Mr YOUNG: Can I suggest, because it is going to happen—by 2020 the Americans are telling us that they are going to have these—

Mr MULHERIN: Supercapacitors—

Mr YOUNG: They are going to have it available and people are going to do it. So what we do then is we pose a scenario where we are going to have four or five people in the street who have the money to do it and they will do it. What I would like to see is that, if we free up the ability to be able to disconnect and connect without going through the onerous process, that would be beneficial for retailers. Otherwise, if it is going to be too onerous, they will tough it out on batteries. That is my concern.

Mr Barr: Yes.

CHAIR: That is more of a statement.

Mr YOUNG: That is a statement.

Ms MILLARD: Just going back to the early part of your discussion and the conversation with regard to having an independent review, have you looked at where that body might come from? Are you looking for a group from within Australia or a group from overseas to completely really dig in deep to find out?

Mr Barr: An international body would struggle to do the review in Queensland, because you would need to understand the retail electricity market in Queensland. So the two bodies that we have probably considered most are the Queensland Competition Authority and the Australian Energy Regulator, because you need to have the data about how retailers are operating—what prices they are giving. You need a legislative function to get the information that you need as well. So they are the two bodies that we have considered.

Ms MILLARD: Whilst they are doing that review—and I understand what you have just said as well—what is their comparison of what they are looking at? What are they comparing what we are doing to what everybody else is doing? What are some of the major aspects?

Mr Barr: The major aspects in determining whether competition is effective in Queensland?

Ms MILLARD: Yes—other than the obvious traits. Is there anything specific that they will be looking at?

Mr Barr: Yes, they will be looking at price outcomes for Queenslanders. They will be looking at switching rates, which is how often do people change retailers. They will be looking at barriers to entries for new retail entrants in the market—do they think you could set up and compete in Queensland? They will be looking at the level of customer service that Queenslanders get in the operation of the market.

Ms MILLARD: Do you think that they need to look at more?

Mr Barr: We are still finetuning it. We are taking as the basis for this the work that the Australian Energy Market Commission does. It does a yearly competition review. It has done competition reviews in Victoria, the ACT, New South Wales. It goes through an extensive process to determine whether competitive is effective. We will probably use those particular indicators that they have rather than reinvent them. We will also have a look at price outcomes and customer service outcomes and come up with that particular package, which should give a very extensive view about whether you are getting a good deal in Queensland or not.

CHAIR: Can I just pick up on that? You indicated that they already do a yearly competition review. How has Queensland fared over the past few years?

Mr Barr: This is the first year that Queensland has been picked up in the AEMC review—is that right?

Ms Findlay: Yes.

Mr Barr: Previously, they used to do it state by state—they have gone around and done particular states. But they have moved to the entirety of the national electricity market this year. So this is the first year that Queensland has been picked up.

CHAIR: Has that review been completed for this year?

Mr Barr: No. It is scheduled to be complete in September. That is one of our preconditions: that review needs to come back and say, 'Competition is effective.'

Mr MULHERIN: Before this legislation—

Mr Barr: Is passed.

Mr MULHERIN: Yes. A barrier to competition will be the charge rate to switch from retailer to retailer. Has any work been done on what that actual cost is to the retailer to switch customers?

Mr Barr: Yes.

Mr MULHERIN: Is there a consideration of capping the rate that a retailer can charge? If you are a pensioner—and you are a sophisticated pensioner and you understand the electricity market and you get on the web and you monitor what these retailers do—you might not be able to afford it if they charge \$100 or \$30. I am in a regulated area, so I would not know what it costs to switch. Switching would be a major barrier to competition. So if the government wants to push competition, are they looking at the maximum charge that a retailer can charge for a customer to switch from one to another?

Mr Barr: We certainly have looked at that. Different states have had different approaches. I will get Kate to answer that.

Ms Jackson: Sure. I think we might be talking about early termination charges, because some customers will not be charged any amount of money for switching from one retailer to another. In the national energy retail rules, which is under the national energy retail law, it states that the early termination charge needs to be a reasonable estimate of the cost to the retailer and it cannot include costs based on lost supply or lost profits. New South Wales and Victoria both cap the early termination charges. I think Victoria is \$20 and New South Wales is determined by IPART. We did have a look at that to have a specific Queensland—

CHAIR: Sorry to interrupt you there. You said New South Wales is by IPART but you did not give us a dollar figure.

Ms Jackson: Sorry, I do not have the dollar figure in my head. It is a lot more than \$20.

CHAIR: Could you take that on notice and find out for us?

Ms Jackson: Okay.

CHAIR: Thank you. Continue.

Ms Jackson: So we did look at whether we specify the termination charge and looking at the national energy retail law provisions stating that it needs to be a reasonable estimate and if IPART determines what a reasonable estimate is for New South Wales retailers who are also Queensland retailers, we did not think to start with 'You would need to have a separate process for Queensland so that the Queensland regulator also has to look at the types of things that IPART is looking at in New South Wales', because the costs should not be that much different between New South Wales and Queensland.

Mr MULHERIN: How do you know that?

Ms Jackson: Because you have the same retailers using the same systems. That is an assumption, sorry.

Mr MULHERIN: Okay.

Mr KATTER: Benn, my understanding is that if you are talking about delivery in regional areas, you are just talking about Ergon?

Mr Barr: Largely. There are some large customers who have gone to market, but the small customers, largely—

Mr KATTER: I understand. There are some mines in my area that deal direct. What elements of the bill have been drafted that benefit regional Queensland if we are not talking about any competition in those areas?

Mr Barr: There are a couple of elements. Certainly, retaining the existing protections that regional Queenslanders have around getting a notified price—that is both for small and large customers. So it is important that we are not weakening the current protections. Also, there are increased protections in the national energy retail law which regional Queensland do not get and they are particularly around customers in on-supply arrangements. That is if you are in a residential home and the person who owns that home is the customer for the electricity retailer and then they onsell that to you. We are certainly strengthening the protections for those customers about the conditions and about how they are told of their prices.

In addition, currently, all retailers do not have to have a hardship policy for customers. The national energy retail law makes sure that every retailer operating in Queensland, including Ergon, has to have a hardship policy and there are requirements around that particular hardship policy. The intent of that really is to keep more customers from disconnecting. So it is about early Brisbane

intervention, giving those customers options around how they pay their bills—whether it is a payment plan, or they pay upfront, or monthly. So there are increased protections for regional Queenslanders.

Mr HART: Given that the government has recently deregulated solar feed-in-tariffs and now we are deregulating retail costs, do you see anything in the deregulation of retail costs that will force the pressure on the solar feed-in-tariffs in one direction or another? And which direction might that be?

Mr Barr: Probably, I guess the intent is, like for all products—whether it is a solar feed-in tariff or your standard electricity retail contract—if there is more competition, hopefully, there are better offers. I cannot give you a guarantee that that will occur—like I cannot give a guarantee on price—but the intention is that competition over the longer term will create more products and a variety of products rather than having one or two retailers offering you 6c.

CHAIR: Okay.

Mr MULHERIN: I have a question to Ms Jackson. You said earlier that you made an assumption about the New South Wales competition regulator, looking at the switching rate costs for retailers, and that the same retailers operate in New South Wales will operate in Queensland so it would be a waste of time doing that work. I put it to you that the same retailers that operate in New South Wales would also operate in Victoria and Victoria is capped at \$20. Why have we not done that work?

Ms Jackson: I am not sure that the Victorian cap is based on actual costs to retailers. So the Victorian—

Mr MULHERIN: So, once again, we are making assumptions.

CHAIR: If I can pick up on that, I think the point is that the Victorian government chose to cap those prices and it has extended greater protection to the Victorian public. Did we not consider that we should do that in Queensland?

Mr Barr: Yes, we did. It is certainly not an assumption. Certainly, we looked at a variety of options, including picking up other jurisdictions' approaches and we looked at what those approaches were. Rather than assuming, the analysis that we did was to have a look at those approaches, talk to both electricity retailers in Queensland and the non-government organisations in Queensland and ask, 'What do you think is the best approach on exit fees in Queensland?'—noting that a regulatory cap on a particular amount that is set by a regulator is an additional burden on those particular retailers—and based on that consultation and analysis we determined that we did not want to put that cap in place.

Mr MULHERIN: You mentioned that you spoke to QCOSS and St Vincent de Paul. What were their concerns? Could you provide the committee with a list of their concerns?

Mr Barr: Yes, certainly. St Vincent de Paul particularly is pretty vocal in not liking fees and charges at all. So off the top of my head, they are probably against retailers being able to charge any fee or charge. That is a valid view from Vinnies. They have done a lot of good work in Victoria. The flip side to that is that, if you ban fees and charges—and while we cap fees and charges—are you just increasing the overall price that consumers pay and are they, therefore, worse off? So we have landed on, 'You are better off having less regulation and more competitive price pressure than more regulation, more stricture and probably a worse outcome for customers.' But we can provide you with the Vinnies and the QCOSS information.

Mr MULHERIN: Who were the other stakeholders that you engaged with that represent the social services area?

Mr Barr: The Queensland Consumers' Association, the seniors body in Queensland as well. QCOSS picks up most of the NGOs but I think we did four or five.

Mr MULHERIN: Would you be able to provide us with a list of those names and what their concerns were?

Mr Barr: Absolutely.

CHAIR: In the explanatory notes, whilst you talk about consultation on both bills I am looking at here and you are good at identifying the various reports that have been done, particularly with the electricity competition bill, you do not provide us with the names at a state level as to who the consultation has been with. Would you mind providing for the committee the complete list?

Mr Barr: Yes, that is no problem.

Mr MULHERIN: And what their issues were?

Mr Barr: We will do a summary of that and we will provide the contact details, too.

Mr MULHERIN: That would be great.

CHAIR: That would be fantastic.

Mr HART: In relation to the national energy retail law and that national framework that has been implemented in each state, what is different in the legislation in Queensland to what other states have done?

Mr Barr: Certainly the protections for regional Queensland and maintaining those protections in regional Queensland is a key difference. The other difference is no other state gives the advanced notice. So that advanced notice of the price change is a particular derogation that we have put in place in Queensland. There are a couple of others. I have a list, actually.

Ms Taylor: The transitional provisions around the no new exit fees for the first two years and also the standing offer prices can only change within the first 12 months. So under NECF it is currently six months and there can be another change but we have limited it to once to allow consumers to be more comfortable with the transition to price or market monitoring.

Mr Barr: We can send you through the full list of Queensland derogations as well.

CHAIR: Can I clarify something? You said no new exit fees for two years. Are we talking about no new fees and charges at all or only for the first two years?

Ms Taylor: From this year. There are currently fees and charges that are able to be charged. They will only be able to charge those from the commencement of market monitoring.

CHAIR: For two years?

Ms Jackson: Two years.

CHAIR: After two years they can then bring in new fees and charges; is that correct?

Mr Barr: Correct, on market and standard contracts.

Ms MILLARD: With regard to the national energy retail law, can you further explain the exempt seller framework? Can you clarify that a little bit more?

Ms Taylor: The AER, the Australian Energy Regulator, has the exempt seller framework which basically applies to circumstances like retirement villages and caravan parks and there are certain provisions where those people would either be exempt or they will need to actually specifically register. We are currently talking to those groups to let them know that that might be something that they need to contact the AER about to get confirmation, but generally the exemption requirements depend on things like how many sub tenants there are. So, if it is more than 10 they might need to register, if it is less than 10 and not metered or metered, so there are different categories that will apply to various on-selling arrangements.

Ms MILLARD: With regard to that, are you currently having a discussion with the office of the Minister for Housing and Public Works because the manufactured homes act is something that is also looking at currently.

Ms Taylor: Yes, we are aware that there is a review of the manufactured homes act at the moment and we are communicating and making sure that things are going to be easy to understand in terms of the people that it affects.

Ms MILLARD: It is certainly a very complex part of that act that they are looking at at the moment so it is always nice to know that departments are actually talking. Thank you.

Mr KATTER: In explanatory note No.4 it says that the retailers advocate for no change in national arrangements whereas the consumer representatives have advocated for more change. Can you outline those concerns of the stakeholders and how the bill has been developed to respond to those concerns?

Mr Barr: It was a pretty extensive consultation process so it would take me a while to go through how we accounted for each NGO's requests. What we did was we went out to them and said, 'How do you think NECF can be improved?' They came to us with a written proposal around that. We then discussed that with retailers and other stakeholders, went back with what our proposal was and got further feedback on that. Rather than go through it line by line, can we provide you a summary of the consultation and how we took it into account?

CHAIR: That would be good. If you could take that on notice.

Mr MULHERIN: Particularly why the retailers advocated for no change.

Mr Barr: The retailers advocated for no change because they operate in a national market and so they are looking for—

Mr MULHERIN: Consistency.

Mr Barr: Consistency so that they can reduce their costs, and that is part of the benefit of the bill. We certainly looked when we did it at also picking up other jurisdictions' changes if we thought they were sensible as well because at least that meant that a retailer was already having to do it in another state or territory as well which reduced the regulatory cost on them.

CHAIR: Can I pick up on that? We have seen in the south-east corner media running campaigns like The Big Switch because electricity prices are a major issue. Will this bill potentially give greater impetus to that? They might be able to band together 50,000 to 100,000 people who normally would not have got together and then go to an interstate retailer who does not currently exist here and get a new deal—I will not say a better deal, but a new deal for Queenslanders.

Mr Barr: Possibly. That is the intent. I cannot sit here and look into the future, but you open it up to different business models and somebody willing to invest, because those companies have to invest to try to win those customers.

CHAIR: What barriers does the National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Bill remove for interstate retailers?

Mr Barr: They do not need to be licensed in Queensland. Currently they need to be licensed in Queensland and they need to meet specific Queensland licence conditions: apply to the regulator and report on a number of things in Queensland around that. So it removes that particular barrier to them. The other barrier it removes is the notified price that the QCA sets. By setting a regulatory price the regulator has imperfect information about what the actual costs are and sometimes the regulator can either set the price too high or too low and that introduces a risk into that particular retailer's business model. By removing both those regulatory barriers you encourage more retailers to invest over the longer term, I guess, as well. This is a long term reform. I think that is important, too. You want over a period of time to have that downward pressure on prices and improve customer service outcomes as well.

CHAIR: If we are removing the requirement to be licensed in Queensland for retailers interstate who are not currently here, are we removing the requirement for anyone in Queensland to be licenced? Will existing licenced operators have to renew their licence or will that fall by the wayside once the time frame expires?

Mr Barr: There will be one licence registration for them across the national electricity market via the AER. But they are still licensed.

CHAIR: They are still licensed, but it is not a Queensland specific licence, it is a national licence.

Mr Barr: Yes.

Mr MULHERIN: So one day we could see the supermarket retailers in this marketplace?

Mr Barr: Potentially.

CHAIR: The ACCC has another inquiry coming on, I can just see it.

Mr Barr: I guess if it is a better customer outcome. When we did the 30-year electricity work, people talked about in the future if you buy an electric vehicle you might package your electricity at the same time. They are all very long-term outcomes though.

Mr YOUNG: They hadn't thought of it until you mentioned it, Tim.

CHAIR: Coles and Woolworths are rushing out now.

Mr HART: You mentioned in your opening that there was a need for a clearer process for price comparisons.

Mr Barr: Yes.

Mr HART: Have you done any work on what those clearer processes might be or do you have something in place?

Mr Barr: Currently you can go to the Queensland Competition Authority website and you plug in how much electricity you use and it spits you out a range of offers and it should tell you what is the best offer for you. There is a national website called Energy Made Easy which offers a very similar service. Part of the problem with both those services is that people do not actually know

about them. We have sat in on consultations done by the Australian Energy Market Commission and only one in 10 people know about that. It is really important people do know about it because there are other services out there in the community such as your iSelects which are commercially run, and that is good that they are doing that, but all the research shows we need an independent source of that information, a trusted source which has all the range of offers and is simple and easy to interrogate. We are certainly working with both the Australian Energy Regulator, which runs that site, and energy retailers about making sure it is simple and easy for customers and also making sure we are getting that message out to customers in advance of 1 July 2015. That is not the only strategy, because while a lot of people use the web now, there are a lot of people who do not use the web so we need other strategies. I guess the key plank of that is looking at using non-government organisations getting out in the community, out into where seniors are living and telling them about the changes and how they can engage in that. Another precondition for the introduction is a strategy around customer engagement and we are working on that strategy now. They are two planks: really targeting people around that very simple website and working with the NGO sector, but we are still finalising that piece of work and we will have that finalised by the passing of the bill.

Mr MULHERIN: Will there be financial support to National Seniors to enable them to engage with their stakeholders?

Mr Barr: There is certainly support to QCOSS and they do work with the seniors body. We do support QCOSS financially to undertake some of that work already and we are looking at what in addition we can do to the current level of support that we give them.

Mr MULHERIN: How much do you support them. What sort of dollar value?

Mr Barr: It is probably about \$240,000 over a couple of years. It is not a huge amount of money in the first instance but we are having a look at what we can do in addition to that for the introduction of 1 July 2015.

Mr KATTER: It is drilling down to a fairly specific and possibly small issue, but the issue was raised with me in one of the remote towns that I visit that on the billing cycle a bill comes in and then they get it in the mail, and if the mail is late for whatever reason—the bloke does not have access to the internet. This is out at Einasleigh. He said he puts the cheque in the mail and he is getting late fees and he is acting within a few days of getting it. I wonder whether you have had any feedback or submissions about that, but perhaps that was not captured and is something that could be addressed in the course of this legislation, that there be some latitude for remote areas.

Mr Barr: That retailer would probably be Ergon. I am not sure how you would regulatorily enforce that one. It is more how does that retailer work with that customer to take into account their particular circumstance. I guess the thing is you can always ask for a waiving of those fees. Part of this customer education process is knowing what your rights are and that you should raise issues with retailers if you think you need to raise issues with them.

CHAIR: Can I thank you very much for your time here this morning and for the information you have provided the committee. We will obviously continue on with our hearings and we may need to have you come back and clarify any matters that were raised by other stakeholders. We would like to extend that invitation to you at a later stage. There being no further questions I will now close this briefing. I would like to remind you that any questions taken on notice, if they could be provided by the close of business on Tuesday, 10 June that will assist the committee in its work. I thank everyone for their attendance at today's briefing and, as always, the committee has gained valuable information that will assist it in its inquiries into the National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Bill 2014 and the Electricity Competition and Protection Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I now declare the briefing closed. Thank you.

Committee adjourned at 10.43 am