




Speech by

Michael Crandon

MEMBER FOR COOMERA

Hansard Wednesday, 7 September 2011

ELECTRICITY PRICE REFORM AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (4.26 pm): I rise to contribute to this debate with respect to the Electricity Price Reform Amendment Bill 2011. The bill was introduced in June this year by the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities. Among other things, it is intended that the bill will ensure that individuals do not profit from the Solar Bonus Scheme by putting in large photovoltaic generator systems. That is fair enough; it was never the intention of the scheme for it to become a money-making enterprise for anyone having the PV systems installed.

What about the forgotten Queenslanders, the excluded Queenslanders, those who do not have an option about whether they can get a solar bonus rebate? In his second reading speech, the minister says that the new system is a fairer pricing framework. There is a group of Queenslanders who will beg to differ on that point. The minister talked about consumers benefiting from a fairer system that aims to encourage Queenslanders to use electricity more efficiently. There is a group of Queenslanders who want to do just that but they are not being rewarded for their efforts. The minister talked about there being a phenomenal growth in the number of solar PV systems in Queensland. I can tell you that those excluded Queenslanders to whom I am referring are part of that group. They are doing their bit, but they do not benefit from the feed-in tariff that the minister has talked about.

Those excluded Queenslanders to whom I refer are those who have opted to move to a manufactured home park. As the shadow minister and member for Buderim mentioned yesterday, say a person lives next door to a manufactured park home, installs the PV systems on their roof and enjoys the minimum rebate of 44c and the deal that has been offered and they then decide it is time to sell up and move. Maybe they will put their three-bedroom or four-bedroom home on the market and allow a young couple to move in with their family and they move—as we all want people to take advantage of this type of living—to the manufactured home park right next door. Immediately those people will find that they will be paying significantly more for the electricity for which they were receiving a rebate when they lived next door to the manufactured home park. Where is the fairness in that? My constituents—Queenslanders all—and those many thousands of other Queenslanders have moved from their family home where they could benefit from the feed-in tariff to a new home where they cannot. A very large number of these Queenslanders are retirees. As such, they are least able to afford the significant increases in electricity that this Labor government has foisted on them and every other Queenslanders. To rub salt into the wound, it excludes them from the feed-in tariff rebate. This government needs to address this unfair system that penalises those who can least afford the increase.

Talking about rubbing salt into the wound, I come to the carbon tax. As stated by the minister, the bill is also intended to ensure that carbon costs can be passed on to consumers. So here we are again. Not only are these Queenslanders I referred to being left out in the cold when it comes to benefiting from feed-in tariff rebates; they are also going to join all other Queenslanders and be hit with Julia Gillard's carbon tax in the form of additional increases to their electricity bills. Gillard's unnecessary and costly \$9 billion tax will hit all families in the state seat of Coomera and right across Queensland. This Labor-Greens carbon tax will drive up electricity prices, threaten jobs and do nothing for the environment.

All Queenslanders, our forgotten families, are already struggling and the carbon tax will make a bad situation worse, with around a \$515 a year hit on their cost of living. And that is just for starters. Let us

remember that this is the biggest and most punitive tax in the world. Among other things, this carbon tax means a \$9 billion a year new tax, a 10 per cent hike in electricity bills in the first year alone and a nine per cent hike in gas bills in the first year alone. Millions of middle-income families will be worse off under this carbon tax.

A policeman and a nurse each earning \$70,000 a year with one dependent child will be on average \$230 a year worse off, even after compensation. And that is just for starters. Should this couple do some extra shifts and earn an extra \$5,000 a year, that bill will increase to \$528. These parents trying to get ahead and provide for their families will be penalised by the carbon tax that is being built into this legislation. It needs to be said again and again to get the message through: this go-it-alone carbon tax will impose a heavy cost on all Queenslanders. Queensland jobs will be sent offshore for no environmental gain. It will push up the price of electricity, gas, transport and food. Small business in the Coomera electorate and right across Queensland will face increased costs, with no direct support.

Julia Gillard has betrayed all of us and those members opposite have aided and abetted her. They have confirmed their support for this carbon tax in this place numerous times. As late as yesterday they voted again for the carbon tax. Days before the last federal election Gillard said, 'There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.' The day before the election she said, 'I rule out a carbon tax.' And, as I said earlier—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! Is the member speaking to the bill?

Mr CRANDON: Absolutely, Madam Deputy Speaker. As I said earlier—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Which clause is the member speaking to?

Mr CRANDON: The carbon tax was mentioned in the second reading speech by the—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Will the member be sure to stay on the bill, please?

Mr CRANDON: Absolutely. Thank you for your guidance, Madam Deputy Speaker. As I said earlier, since she implemented it, those opposite have voted for it and supported it in this place numerous times. Now we see the minister enshrining the carbon tax in this legislation.