




Speech By
Steve Minnikin

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

ENERGY AND WATER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (4.59 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Energy and Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. Firstly, I commend the Hon. Mark McArdle, the Minister for Energy and Water Supply, on bringing to the House a piece of legislation that slashes incredible amounts of red tape—a legacy of the former ALP government. It is wonderful to see the minister back in the chamber and I, too, wish him all the very best.

It still astounds me—as I think I have said on no fewer than three or four occasions in this hallowed chamber—why the opposition does not simply save us time and through the Speaker say to the good people of Queensland: we apologise, and we will now recalibrate things and start being a credible opposition? What is going on here? We have a state opposition that is now opposed to this bill because its deposed federal colleagues are now in opposition themselves. Talk about a party without spine or principle.

This amendment bill has three objectives. However, I will touch on the two objectives that affect the constituents of my electorate of Chatsworth the most. This amendment bill will cater for the closure of the Queensland Gas Scheme and Smart Energy Savings Program. The ending of these two programs established by the previous failed government will cut red tape and work towards lowering the cost of living for hardworking Queenslanders. The Queensland Gas Scheme commenced in 2005 with the objective of assisting to boost the Queensland gas industry and thereby reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The scheme was successful in diversifying the gas industry. Introduced under the carbon pricing mechanism in July 2012, there has been additional red tape to be dealt with. We will deal with that red tape.

It is detrimental for a scheme that is meant to secure investment in the Queensland gas industry to increase the usage of gas fired generation. Like most schemes, the former ALP government bungled this one with red tape. Even though the government is closing this scheme, I am proud to be part of a government that understands the needs of the industry. Therefore, industry stakeholders will be given until 31 December this year to settle contractual matters as well as calculate the amount of gas electricity certificates and number of certificates required for the remainder of the year. This proves that the Newman government is aware of the impacts this closure will have on the industry. We will not be pulling the carpet from underneath them. The closure of the Queensland Gas Scheme will ensure that the burden of regulation is lowered for generators and retailers. Ultimately, this burden and the associated costs are passed on to—guess where?—the consumer: Queenslanders who pay the ultimate price in their electricity bills.

The Smart Energy Savings Program, known by its acronym SESP, was established on 1 July 2009 to encourage Queensland businesses that were high energy consumers to make savings. In theory, it sounds like a great idea to make savings. However, like every scheme the ALP touches it certainly does not turn to gold—quite the opposite. Businesses under this scheme are not making any savings. How could they? The SESP requires business to audit their energy use, develop and implement reduction initiatives as well as publish their results every five years. The basis of the SESP

was to increase the update of energy efficient practices as well as assist businesses in energy cost savings.

There is one massive problem with this program's objectives: the cost of compliance. Let me say that again for the benefit of those opposite—or the one ALP member opposite—the cost of compliance. Like many of my colleagues in the House today, I am like a broken record pointing out the failures of the ALP, which was in charge for the past 20 years. It is no wonder we were given such a comprehensive mandate on 24 March last year to manage Queensland differently—a state that is free from the restraints of red tape. Government is not meant to hold businesses back. The purpose of a government is to enable people and their businesses to prosper. My colleagues in the chamber may be interested to know that businesses under the SESP were subject to costs anywhere from \$2,000 to \$20,000, not including internal reporting and administration costs. This amendment bill will ensure that large manufacturing companies in my own electorate of Chatsworth such as the Smiths Chips factory will not be subjected to these excessive and wasteful costs.

Why is there such a big emphasis from the Newman government on reducing red tape and regulation? It is very simple. My colleagues and I are from the real world with real-world experience in running businesses, managing issues, dealing with customers—you name it. We have small business owners, engineers, valuers, farmers and many more business backgrounds representing the great people of Queensland. We actually get what everyday people who are trying to get ahead go through, unlike those opposite whose collective business acumen amounts to very little in the way of real-world experience.

This amendment bill will fulfil another of the Newman government's election promises. On 8 March this year the LNP announced that we would end the SESP immediately as well as repeal the Clean Energy Act as soon as possible to cut red tape from the state's energy sector. I am strongly committed to making it easier for Chatsworth's small and medium sized businesses to get on with their core activities. This amendment bill will be another tangible way in which the Newman government is doing just that. It is the ultimate privilege to represent my electorate in this chamber. I am proud to speak on bills that will have a tangible, positive outcome for my constituents. I commend this bill to the House and look forward to supporting more legislation from this government which breaks down the chains of red tape and cumbersome bureaucratic regulation.