




Speech By  
**Michael Hart**

**MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH**

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**ELECTRICITY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (4.21 pm): If it is okay with everybody, I might bring this debate back to a bit of reality and maybe a bit of relevance as well. I rise to speak to the Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The member for Keppel is exactly right. He has covered the coal seam gas water aspects of this bill and he is right when he said that one of his other colleagues would cover the Solar Bonus Scheme debate—and that is going to be me, at least at this stage.

We have heard today from the member for Mulgrave, who purports to be the shadow Treasurer of the opposition. The shadow Treasurer, you would think, would know something about numbers and might have some sort of rationale about how to run a balance sheet and how to take care of a state, but he has just proven that he has no idea when it comes to running a state. He has no idea when it comes to the problems that the Labor Party put in place with the solar feed-in tariff.

I think members on this side of the House would agree that solar power is a wonderful thing. It is very green and it is good for the environment. But, when you attach a 44c feed-in tariff to it like the previous Labor government did, that creates an ongoing problem for governments year in, year out of hundreds of millions of dollars. We have heard in the past that this is in fact adding over \$250 a year to everybody's electricity bill in this state. They completely messed up that scheme. They had a light bulb moment: 'Let's go out and do something about solar power.' They went out and they completely messed it up, and they have a history of doing that, do they not? We all remember the pink batts scheme, and we have been reminded in the last few weeks about it, that wonderful pink batts scheme that the federal Labor Party came up with—another possibly good idea that was completely and utterly messed up by incompetent Labor members. What about the carbon tax? We have the carbon tax—another light bulb moment that was messed up by the Labor government. And we have recycled water—there is another great idea. We spent \$9 billion in this state alone and we borrowed all that money.

**Mr Rickuss:** Wyaralong Dam doesn't have any pipes.

**Mr HART:** I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer that Wyaralong Dam does not have any pipes. We have the Traveston Dam failure. We have the Gold Coast desalination plant. It just goes on and on and on. The people of Queensland, and the people of Australia, are well aware of these idiot schemes that these people come up with. To stand here and criticise this government for what it has been doing for the last two years since we have been elected is just ludicrous.

This government has decided to continue mandating a feed-in tariff payment for small customers with solar PVs in regional Queensland because these customers do not have access to voluntary feed-in tariff payments in the retail electricity market. Without regulatory intervention, these regional Queensland customers are likely to receive no payment for their exported electricity once the 8c per kilowatt feed-in tariff expires. That disadvantages them over other Queensland small customers with solar PV and other electricity generators.

The government has decided not to mandate new feed-in tariff arrangements for small customers in South-East Queensland—those are the customers connected to the Energex supply network—when the 8c per kilowatt feed-in tariff expires. That does not mean that people will not be paid a feed-in tariff. All that means is that we are taking away the mandatory 8c per kilowatt feed-in tariff and we are going to go out there to the free market and see what people offer. These electricity retailers have a habit of trying to attract customers. Why would they do that? They want to stay in business. So the best thing that they can possibly do is to offer more money as a feed-in tariff than the 8c per kilowatt that is presently regulated, and we have seen that in the market before. We have people out there offering 10c, 12c or 14c per kilowatt feed-in tariff. So taking away this mandated 8c per kilowatt feed-in tariff will not do what the member for Mulgrave said: it will not stop people receiving a feed-in tariff in South-East Queensland. Once again, the member for Mulgrave, the so-called shadow Treasurer of the opposition, is completely off track. The lights have gone out. There is no-one home. He has not got a clue what he is saying.

In particular, I would also like to discuss amendments in the bill that are aimed at improving the efficiency of funding the state's contribution to national energy market regulation, specifically our contribution to the annual budget of the Australian Energy Market Commission payment. Some members may not be aware of the benefit this state derives from participating in a national energy market. One of the primary benefits of participation in the national market is interconnection of previously separate state electricity systems and markets. This allows for the transfer of electricity between regions and has realised significant benefits for Queensland. These benefits include earnings from exporting electricity and the ability to supplement our requirements at times with lower priced generation from the southern states, which ultimately delivers better electricity price outcomes for Queensland. Of course that is what this government is all about: reducing the cost of living for people in Queensland.

There are also gas market benefits from national market mechanisms that are promoting greater transparency and liquidity in the natural gas market, while cementing the rules around how access to pipeline services is provided. Queensland's and other jurisdictions' participation in the national electricity and gas markets is underpinned by the Australian Energy Market Agreement. Made in 2004, the Australian Energy Market Agreement documents the jurisdictions' shared vision to ensure the continued development of an open and competitive national energy market.

The AEMA also established jurisdictions' commitment to the underpinning arrangements, including a consistent national regulatory framework through the national electricity and gas laws and associated rules, as well as the establishment of a national market governance body. So you can see that this bill provides a lot of opportunities for the people of Queensland. We are moving forward in an effort to reduce the cost of living for people. I think we are on track to do that. With those few words, I congratulate the other members of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee for their hard work on this bill and advise the House that I will be supporting the bill.