




Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Bailey**

**MEMBER FOR YEERONGPILLY**

Record of Proceedings, 6 May 2015

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Electricity Prices**

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (2.35 pm): Much has been said in recent times about electricity prices for Queenslanders. We know that many households and businesses have been doing it tough over the last three years. That is why we are rolling out another key election commitment by establishing an independent Queensland Productivity Commission.

Its first task is to conduct a public inquiry into electricity prices in Queensland. Independent experts will conduct this inquiry by means of an open and transparent process, which will be informed by extensive public consultation. To enable the commission to do its job effectively, a decision has been made to defer for 12 months the previous LNP government's rushed laws to deregulate retail electricity prices in South-East Queensland. This way, input can be sought from the community, businesses, industry and key stakeholders so that the final deregulation model achieves the best possible outcome for Queenslanders.

We will have stronger consumer protection measures in place from 1 July to ease the financial burden on households and small businesses. Our decision has been welcomed by National Seniors, the Queensland Consumer Association and the Queensland Council of Social Service—all strong advocates for vulnerable Queenslanders. Ultimately, we want to ensure that they have the protection they need when times are tough. The Productivity Commission will be asked to deliver an interim report, with a focus on retail deregulation.

The recent draft report from the Australian Energy Regulator has reined in the power price hikes that Queenslanders were subjected to in recent years. That report flags no more double-digit price hikes that saw the average bill rise by 43 per cent when the price of electricity in Queensland went from well below the national average to well above it under the previous government. This is welcome relief for households and for small businesses across the state.

In terms of prices for householders, the draft report by the regulator signals that the average annual electricity bill may reduce by \$34, or 1.8 per cent, in the next financial year. This draft determination by the Australian Energy Regulator reinforces the importance of keeping public assets in public hands.

**Mr McArdle** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Caloundra, I would ask you to desist. Your interjections are not being taken by the minister. I call the minister.

**Mr McArdle** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Caloundra.

**Mr BAILEY:** This draft determination by the Australian Energy Regulator reinforces the importance of keeping public assets in public hands. If these crucial public assets ended up in private ownership, the results would have been bad for Queenslanders' electricity bills and for their jobs. Our

aim with the Productivity Commission and the deferral of deregulation is to draw on the advice of the experts and listen to the community, industry and stakeholders so that together we can achieve an outcome that is in everyone's best interests.