




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR YEERONGPILLY

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Powering Queensland Plan

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (9.59 am): Last Friday an important review into the broken national electricity market was released to COAG. Chief Scientist Dr Alan Finkel's National Electricity Market Review is a vital and overdue assessment that tackles some of the most critical challenges we face in energy and climate policy today. Under both the Abbott and Turnbull governments, the lack of policy certainty has undermined industry investment in new infrastructure, leading to a lack of supply coming online, driving up wholesale prices. We fully support a reform of the broken national electricity market to ensure that better outcomes flow to consumers and Dr Finkel's final report deserves thoughtful consideration by the states and stakeholders.

While there has been a disappointing lack of leadership by the Turnbull government on energy policy, Queensland has been acting decisively to back Queensland electricity consumers and lead the transition to the latest and cheapest power generation, renewable energy. We are backing Queenslanders by investing \$1.16 billion in our recently announced Powering Queensland Plan, which will put downward pressure on wholesale energy costs, deliver new jobs and investment, particularly in regional and North Queensland, leading the transition to a clean energy future.

Actions under the Powering Queensland Plan include: investing \$770 million in a major cost-of-living measure to reduce the impact of the recent QCA regional price increase by more than half; establishing a North Queensland clean energy hub, including the Burdekin hydro, and a new renewable bulk transmission line to get more renewable energy infrastructure into our grid; and a three-pronged attack on wholesale energy costs. Swanbank E was mothballed by the Newman government. We are bringing it back online. It will be the second largest combined-cycle gas station in the country and will increase supply and reduce volatility in our Queensland wholesale market. The second prong will be to direct Stanwell to adjust its bidding to maximise outcomes in the energy market. We are looking at restructuring our two government owned—that is, publicly owned—generators to create a third generator, CleanCo, which will be our third prong to address wholesale pricing. What impact did that announcement have? A 10 per cent drop in the future wholesale price within 24 hours. That is the impact of the Powering Queensland Plan.

Of course, we are also establishing a North Queensland clean energy hub. We have announced an energy security task force, led by former Energex CEO Terry Effenev, to guide the state's robust energy security for both the short and the long term. We are using the levers of public asset ownership to put downward pressure on electricity prices. We are the envy of the rest of the country, as they face electricity price increases of 19 per cent in the ACT, double digits in New South Wales and double digits in Victoria, just as we saw in the Newman government era. We would not have been able to take these actions if the LNP had had their way and sold our assets, with profits going interstate and overseas instead of being used to benefit Queenslanders.

Shortly after we released our plan, the Energy Users Association of Australia said that it was providing a real benefit and a ray of hope for all energy users. Currently, the wholesale futures price for Queensland is tracking lower than in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, because of the Palaszczuk government. Electricity is one of the key cost-of-living issues for Queenslanders after the 43 per cent increases that we saw when the member for Clayfield was treasurer. In our first term of government, we have stabilised electricity costs for households with an average increase of 1.9 per cent per annum, as opposed to the double digit increases under the previous government. For the record and the benefit of the House, I proudly table the Powering Queensland Plan and the Powering North Queensland Plan.

Tabled paper: Powering Queensland Plan, Department of Energy and Water Supply [\[894\]](#).

Tabled paper: Powering North Queensland Plan, Department of Energy and Water Supply [\[895\]](#).