




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR YEERONGPILLY

Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2017

ELECTRICITY AND OTHER LEGISLATION (BATTERIES AND PREMIUM FEED-IN TARIFF) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (2.31 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Electricity Act 1994 and the Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Public Works and Utilities Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Electricity and Other Legislation (Batteries and Premium Feed-in Tariff) Amendment Bill 2017 [\[996\]](#).

Tabled paper: Electricity and Other Legislation (Batteries and Premium Feed-in Tariff) Amendment Bill 2017, explanatory notes [\[997\]](#).

The bill clarifies the regulatory arrangements for how batteries and additional generation can work alongside the Solar Bonus Scheme. The bill also makes it easier for embedded network customers to access the competitive retail market. Queensland has one of the world's highest rates of uptake for small-scale solar power, which is installed in around one in three households. The Solar Bonus Scheme played a pivotal role in driving this solar uptake at an early stage. While the scheme has closed to new customers, we are still seeing strong demand for small-scale solar as renewable technology prices continue to fall and customers look to take greater control over their energy use. We are also seeing rapid growth in the development of complementary technologies such as battery storage. Battery storage has the potential to give customers even more control over their usage and provide other benefits to the network.

Queensland government policies which support the transition to a cleaner energy sector, including our commitment to 50 per cent renewables by 2030, one million solar rooftops or 3,000 megawatt commitment, and the actions set out in the Powering Queensland Plan, help add to this demand and development of the clean energy sector. The provisions of this bill further demonstrate the government's commitment to supporting a clean energy future for Queensland. The amendments in the bill clarify how batteries and additional generation can work alongside the Solar Bonus Scheme while preserving the original intent of the scheme.

The scheme was designed so that generation from a qualifying generator would be used in customers' homes and businesses first, with any excess beyond normal consumption to be exported. It is proposed that these provisions commence retrospectively from the date of introduction today. The government has not made this decision lightly; however, this is necessary to minimise opportunities for customers to unfairly profit from ambiguity in the law while the bill is considered. Transitional provisions will preserve the rights of those who have invested or contracted to invest in equipment under the legislation in place at the time of introduction.

The bill retains our commitment to the Solar Bonus Scheme and provides a fair solution for Solar Bonus Scheme customers who wish to embrace new technologies. Changes to the National Electricity Rules which apply in Queensland will come into effect on 1 December 2017. These changes will clarify the regulatory arrangements for retail competition in embedded networks and make it easier for

embedded network customers to choose an alternative electricity supplier. Embedded network customers are those customers who purchase their electricity from an embedded network operator such as a body corporate, caravan park owner or a shopping centre. With the increasing popularity of embedded networks in recent years, it is important that customers within these networks have the ability to choose the price and price structure of the electricity service that suits them best and are able to easily access government schemes and consumer protections. The new rule does not prevent embedded network operators from continuing to sell electricity to embedded network customers; however, it will provide them with a greater incentive to compete with retailers.

To support the changes, it is necessary to amend the Electricity Act 1994 to remove the legislative barrier that restricts competition for embedded network customers and ensure there is no inconsistency with the national framework. This bill will also ensure that eligible embedded network customers who decide to purchase their electricity from a chosen retailer will have access to the free dispute resolution services of the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland, just as direct customers can. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. MC BAILEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (2.36 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Public Works and Utilities Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Public Works and Utilities Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. MC BAILEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (2.36 pm), by leave, without notice, I move:

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Public Works and Utilities Committee report to the House on the Electricity and Other Legislation (Batteries and Premium Feed-in Tariff) Amendment Bill by 11 August 2017.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.