

## **Question on Notice**

**No. 980**

**Asked on 22 August 2018**

**MR R KATTER** ASKED DEPUTY PREMIER, TREASURER AND MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARTNERSHIPS (HON J TRAD)—

### **QUESTION:**

With reference to decades of price increases for essential infrastructure services and the recent dysfunction on the regulated rail networks in the Bowen Basin and North West Minerals Province—

Will the Deputy Premier acknowledge that (a) Labor's sale and corporatisation of rail, water and energy infrastructure has resulted in price increases for households and business and (b) the current regulatory processes for rail access in Queensland's two major mining provinces, the North West Minerals Province and the Bowen Basin, are dysfunctional?

### **ANSWER:**

The Palaszczuk Government has kept our election commitment to not sell assets.

By keeping our electricity assets in public hands, we have been able to implement a number of initiatives under our \$2 billion Affordable Energy Plan which have been putting downward pressure on electricity prices. This includes providing a two-year cap on electricity price rises to average inflation and a \$50 annual Asset Ownership Dividend will also provide bill relief for households over 2017-18 and 2018-19.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to lowering cost of living impacts on Queensland households and businesses. This includes putting downward pressure on prices through a range of initiatives and providing concessions to improve the affordability of water, energy and transport.

We are also establishing a third publicly owned generator, CleanCo, which is expected to translate to an estimated \$70 per annum saving for the average Queensland household.

Our Government's energy initiatives are possible because we own our power assets which gives us the unique ability to reinvest dividends to make electricity more affordable, something other states that have sold off their generators, poles and wires cannot do. This is in stark contrast to the 43 per cent increase in household power prices experienced under the LNP.

Reducing cost of living pressures is always front of mind. The Government, as the owner of significant water infrastructure in South East Queensland, has set bulk water prices to provide certainty and limit the potential impacts on customers.

Access to rail networks in the Bowen Basin and North West Minerals Province has been regulated by the State's independent regulator, the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA), since 1998. Under this regime, the QCA approves terms and conditions of access (including price) having regard to a range of factors including the public interest. The regulatory regime applying to the declared rail services is consistent with nationally agreed principles and has been certified as effective.

I am advised that the QCA is currently reviewing Queensland Rail's 2020 Draft Access Undertaking which sets out its proposed terms and conditions for negotiating access to its rail infrastructure when the existing access undertaking expires in June 2020. The QCA has also commenced its review of the existing third party access declaration of Queensland Rail. Queensland Rail has made a submission to the QCA as part of this review which is published on the QCA's website. These are regulatory issues on which the QCA, Queensland Rail and rail operators should work constructively to progress within the established regulatory framework.