




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (5.09 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Electricity and Other Legislation (Batteries and Premium Feed-in Tariff) Amendment Bill 2018. Here we are yet again. The LNP opposition and the parliament are once again being asked to support legislation to rectify the mess of Labor's own making. Not too long ago we sat in this House and we were called upon by Labor to support yet more legislation to clean up the mess made by Labor's handling of the circumstances surrounding Ipswich City Council and the issues caused by Labor's Ipswich city councillors, and that was a stain of corruption which is a stain on the Labor Party itself.

Mr Bailey interjected.

Dr ROWAN: Back then it was local government; now it is electricity and green schemes. I hear the member for Miller interjecting. Whilst he has been cleared by the CCC, I would say that some of his dubious practices in relation to his backchannel email communications when it comes to mangocube are very dubious.

Mr BAILEY: I rise to a point of order. The member is straying well off the bill and I ask him to come back and address the bill instead of personal attacks on me.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms McMillan): Thank you for your advice, member. I ask that you return to the long title of the bill.

Dr ROWAN: Those opposite do not like hearing that, but who knows? With any luck the next sitting of parliament may be an opportunity to clean up Labor's transport and traffic congestion mess, which the member for Miller is leading, or even hospital wait times, access block or ambulance ramping.

The LNP will not oppose the bill before us today. Having said that, there are a number of issues that must be made clear and placed on the record before Labor can congratulate itself. I want to draw to the attention of the House the ham-fisted process that this bill has gone through. As my colleague and my good friend the member for Condamine highlighted in the Liberal National Party's statement of reservation to the parliamentary committee report—

... there were no public hearings offered to submitters to appear before the committee due to the very short timeframe to finalise the report.

That is right. Instead, all the committee was afforded was a public briefing from the department and a written response to submissions by the department. There was no opportunity for the committee to perform one of its central and most basic functions, and that is being able to ask questions of those who took the time and effort to make submissions. Further, it is worth noting that an earlier incarnation of this bill was introduced in June last year during the 55th Parliament. With the then committee issuing its report in August, the bill sat idle on the *Notice Paper* right up until it lapsed due to the 55th Parliament being dissolved.

What we do know is that with the bill now before us these amendments being processed today seek to address, amongst other things, one of Labor's most substantial public policy failures and financial burdens—the Solar Bonus Scheme. True to form, the Solar Bonus Scheme had all the hallmarks of a true Queensland Labor policy—that is, announce a brand-new policy or scheme, bask in the publicity but deal with the consequences and substantial financial burden later.

Announced with great fanfare in 2008, the Solar Bonus Scheme was introduced without detailed consideration into how new solar PV systems and storage devices would impact the scheme over subsequent years. With a solar feed-in tariff of 44 cents, it was a scheme that was later described by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Chairman, Rod Sims, as excessively generous, and that is putting it nicely.

By 2012, as the true financial burden that this scheme would have on Queensland became clear, the Liberal National Party closed the scheme to new entrants in order to reduce electricity prices and contain what was projected to be a truly substantial cost blowout. Even with the measures and strong action undertaken by the Liberal National Party, it is estimated that this scheme will still end up costing Queensland more than \$4 billion by 2028. Over \$4 billion is one almighty price to pay for a Labor photo opportunity and to keep the Greens on side and have shady Labor-Greens preference deals implemented come election time.

That being said, at least with the passing of these changes today we can save the Queensland economy from a further estimated blowout of over \$1 billion. If there is one thing Labor and the Greens have in common, it is reckless financial management. Labor's Solar Bonus Scheme has pushed up electricity costs. It is a sad state of affairs that in this country Queenslanders—hardworking families, seniors and pensioners, small business owners—pay more than any other state for green schemes and Labor's failures, and that is certainly the case for residents in the electorate of Moggill.

This Palaszczuk Labor government continues to fail my constituents in the electorate of Moggill on electricity prices, cost of living, traffic congestion, planning legislation and school infrastructure. However, I am pleased that this bill does at least give adequate regard to the rights of individuals by clarifying how customers can invest in new technology without affecting their solar bonus eligibility and establishing clear boundaries as to what is permissible.

The proposals today are a start in addressing the many inadequacies of Labor's electricity policies and financial imposts, but there is still more to be done. At a time when Queenslanders are genuinely hurting from the ever-rising cost of living and electricity prices, thanks in no part to Labor's locked-in gold plating of the electricity network, it is imperative that more is done to reform the electricity market. We on this side of the House in the Liberal National Party have already begun with the announcement of our plans for a more competitive electricity market by restructuring our government owned power generators from two to three entities as well as our plan to introduce retail competition in the regional electricity market.

Mr Bailey interjected.

Dr ROWAN: I hear the minister still interjecting over there. He does not like hearing that. He does not like hearing the fact that Labor's electricity policies have failed Queenslanders. There are higher prices for residents in the electorate of Moggill, for residents in his electorate of Miller and right across Queensland. Those opposite do not like hearing the truth when it comes to these things. They are driving up electricity costs and prices for not only consumers but also businesses. They are putting industry at risk here in Queensland and it is simply not good enough.

This Palaszczuk Labor government has no plans to drive down electricity costs; no plans for infrastructure, let alone in the western suburbs of Brisbane; and no plan to reduce the cost of living. It is driving up higher unemployment and higher debt when it comes to Queensland—up to \$83 billion by 2021-22. It is not good enough for Queenslanders. It is certainly not good enough for my residents in the electorate of Moggill and right across the western suburbs of Brisbane. This is only just the beginning and we know that so much more needs to be done to rectify the hurt caused by this Labor government's electricity policies and green schemes failing.

Finally, whilst renewable energy is an important part of our energy mix, we must also continue to support our traditional energy sources to deliver baseload power generation and, as such, ensure electricity in Queensland is both reliable and affordable. That is very important for my constituents in Moggill. It is very important for all residents across the western suburbs of Brisbane, but it is also vitally important for Queensland's economy.