



Rockhampton Public Hearing

11 April 2016

Summary of Discussion

The Queensland Productivity Commission held a Public Hearing in Rockhampton on 11 April 2016 to discuss its inquiries into electricity pricing and solar feed-in tariffs, following publication of the Draft Reports. The forum provided interested parties with the opportunity to present evidence and views to the Commission, relevant to the two inquiries.

A summary of those views and associated discussion, prepared by officers from the Commission, is presented below.

Presentation by Chris Hooper

Key points

- The cost of the solar bonus scheme is smeared across electricity users in Queensland. It is unfair because even those who are not participating in the Scheme must pay.
- The financially disadvantaged and those who rent have been unable to access the Scheme.
- Too much money has been spent on infrastructure that is not needed. There is gold plating, and that is reflected in high electricity prices.
- Large users of electricity should curb their usage during peak periods. If this had happened, much of this infrastructure would not have been needed.
- The regulated cost of debt is less than the actual cost of debt for network businesses.
- People who use more electricity should be forced to pay more.
- According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the electricity industry profits rose by 67% between 2007 and 2008 and 2010 and 2011. In that same period electricity bills rose 40%.
- The electricity regulator may not be completely independent.

Comments from other attendees

- New technology will change the way that we produce and use electricity.
- The fixed component of electricity bills have gone up substantially. People's ability to control electricity costs has diminished because they are paying a higher charge whether or not they use electricity. This is very difficult for people on low incomes.
- On some tariffs offered by Ergon Energy, the more power you use, the dearer it gets.