



## Urgent call to register for workshops on electricity prices

### MEDIA RELEASE- 14 February 2018

Coordinator of the Queensland Electricity Users Network (QEUN) Jennifer Brownie is strongly urging businesses and residents throughout Queensland to voice their opinion on electricity prices by registering for Queensland Competition Authority workshops.

“The Queensland Competition Authority has announced they will only hold workshops across regional Queensland if there is “**sufficient interest**” in electricity prices in a particular location,” Ms Brownie said.

In February the Queensland Competition Authority will release the *Draft* 2018-19 regulated retail electricity prices for regional Queensland with *Final* prices to be announced by 31<sup>st</sup> May.

“The regulated retail electricity prices are the electricity prices that appear on business and household power bills throughout regional Queensland, therefore it is imperative that consumers attend QCA’s regional workshops,” she said.

A recent survey of over 700 businesses in regional Queensland found that around 70% of businesses have become less profitable as a result of higher electricity prices, yet 86% said their viability would improve if the cost of electricity was reduced.

In the covering letter accompanying the Queensland Energy Minister’s Delegation to the Queensland Competition Authority, Minister Lynham stated that “public consultation is a vital part of the QCA’s process for determining retail electricity prices.”

If there is **sufficient interest** the Queensland Competition Authority will hold workshops in Bundaberg, Cairns, Cloncurry, Emerald, Mackay, Mount Isa, Rockhampton, Toowoomba, Townsville, Brisbane and other locations subject to stakeholder interest.

“We encourage consumers to urgently register their interest to ensure regional workshops are not cancelled,” Ms Brownie said.

To register for a QCA workshop click on: [www.qca.org.au/workshops](http://www.qca.org.au/workshops)

To read the findings of the regional Queensland business survey click on:  
[www.qeun.com.au/index.html#business](http://www.qeun.com.au/index.html#business)

**For more information on how to reduce power bills in 2018-19 please refer to the next page.**

Media enquiries please contact: Jennifer Brownie, Coordinator, QEUN on 0740 312 865

## Your help is needed to reduce power bills in 2018-19

Posting your “power bill experience” on the QEUN website will demonstrate to the Queensland Government that power bills are causing financial stress to the engine room of the Queensland economy – small business.

The **DRAFT** 2018-19 regulated retail electricity prices for regional Queensland will be announced by the Queensland Competition Authority **in FEBRUARY**, with the **FINAL** 2018-19 retail prices announced **by 31<sup>st</sup> MAY**.

The Queensland Government can lower electricity prices for ALL Queensland business and residential customers if it chooses to accept lower profits from its 100% Queensland Government owned electricity assets.

### Generation represents about 25% of a power bill

The Queensland Government owned generators; Stanwell Corporation and CS Energy, account for about 65% of the electricity generation capacity in Queensland.

In 2016-17, the Queensland Government expected to earn \$482 million from its electricity generation assets but over last year’s hot summer pushed wholesale electricity prices up to enable the earnings to jump to \$892 million. The Queensland Government expects to earn over a billion dollars in 2017-18.

### Network charges represent about 50% of a power bill

The Queensland Government owns the entire Queensland transmission network (Powerlink) and the Queensland distribution networks (Ergon Energy Network in regional Queensland and Energex in Southeast Queensland).

### Retail charges account for about 25% of a power bill

The Queensland Government owns 100% of Ergon Energy Retail. Ergon Energy Retail has a near monopoly position in the retail market in regional Queensland selling electricity to over 700,000 business and residential customers. Ergon Energy Retail can only charge customers the retail electricity prices stipulated in the Queensland Government Gazette. Since 2007 the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) has received a Delegation from the Queensland Government to set regulated retail electricity prices in the Queensland Government Gazette. However, the Queensland Government is responsible for setting regulated retail electricity prices in regional Queensland. This was clearly evident last year when the Queensland Government overturned the decision of the Queensland Competition Authority only hours after the QCA announced the 2017-18 regulated retail prices for regional Queensland.

The Southeast Queensland retail electricity market has over 1.4 million customers; business customers can access offers from 17 retailers and residential customers from 19 retailers.

The Queensland Government can reduce business and residential power bills if it chooses to accept lower profits from its 100% Queensland Government owned generation, network and retail electricity assets.

## Help us to reduce power bills by telling us your power bill experience.

Click on [www.qeun.com.au](http://www.qeun.com.au) to post your experience.

### Small business customers disconnected for non-payment of electricity by jurisdiction

	2015-16	2016-17	Change to previous financial year
New South Wales <sup>1</sup>	3107	2137	-31%
Queensland <sup>1</sup>	1403	1641	+17%
<b>Ergon Energy in regional Queensland<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>384</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>+82%</b>
South Australia <sup>1</sup>	678	727	+7%
Tasmania <sup>1</sup>	84	83	-1%
ACT <sup>1</sup>	75	76	+1%
Victoria <sup>2</sup>	4319	3434	-20%

1. Under the National Energy Retail Law the Australian Energy Regulator is not responsible for the reporting of retailer performance in Victoria.

2. Statistics for Victoria sourced from the Essential Services Commission of Victoria