



Office of the
Minister for Energy and Water Supply

Your Ref: 10.4 Petitions
Our Ref: EWS/002975

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27 March 2013

Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 14 February 2013 enclosing a copy of Petition No. 2033-12 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

I would firstly like to thank Mr King MP and Mr Trout MP for gathering this petition together and being voices for their community, who are very concerned about the Federal Government's agenda for electricity reform.

In recent times the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) have been utilising a campaign of misinformation in relation to energy assets privatisation. They have placed up billboards and signs to mislead the public and their membership in relation to this matter.

It has been made abundantly clear by Premier Campbell Newman and all senior Government Ministers that the Queensland Government will not privatise assets without an electoral mandate. It is an iron clad promise.

Yet despite this position being common knowledge, the ETU have begun a campaign stating that the Newman Government wants to sell poles and wires without seeking a mandate. There is no secret privatisation agenda.

The signatories to this petition have every reason to be concerned regarding the Federal Government's view on electricity reform. In a Submission to the Senate-Select Committee on Electricity Pricing, on page 4 in the Executive Summary this statement was made:

"The Australian Government has a clear path for better-functioning energy markets through the progression of a set of critical reform issues. These include: ... Privatising government-owned energy assets – continued government ownership of energy businesses is impeding greater competition and efficiency, and reduces market confidence by creating uncertainty and risk for private sector investors."

There have been multiple articles and statements by the Gillard Government that the industry should not only be deregulated, but it also ought to be privatised. A simple Google Search of 'Julia Gillard and Electricity Privatisation' would display a range of articles and information that indicate the Federal Government's position.

The Newman Government will not sell poles and wires without a mandate. We will listen to the views of the community and sincerely thank the signatories to this petition for making their voices heard in relation to this issue.

In 2011, ETU Secretary (NT & Qld) Peter Simpson and Far North Queensland ETU Organiser Stuart Traill were expelled from the Labor Party during the asset sales debate. They were both advocates for their members against the Bligh Government's asset sales. Earlier this year, Mr Simpson and Mr Traill were re-admitted to the Labor Party.

In the February 14, 2012 article of The Australian by Michael McKenna, when asked if he believed the Bligh Government should be re-elected, Mr Simpson said:

"If I answered that question honestly, what do you think will happen? ... It would be the shortest re-admittance to the party in history."

Newman Government is against Federal Labor's privatisation agenda. We can be clear, unequivocal and uncompromised in our belief in standing up for Queensland.

Federal Labor this year alone has made multiple statements in support of privatisation of a range of state-owned assets.

On the 29th of November 2012, Premier Campbell Newman invited the ETU to join him on a campaign against energy asset privatisation.

The Premier re-iterated this Government's clear vision and invited the Electrical Trades Union to stand up against Federal Labor's privatisation agenda. It is unfortunate that they have continued a deceitful campaign against the Newman Government rather than advocating effectively for their membership against the Federal Labor Government.

If the ETU are so concerned with the privatisation of energy assets then they should reconsider their donations to the Labor Party and their waste of union members' funds on political campaigns against the Newman Government that has no plans to sell assets without a mandate.

I thank the petitioners for their contribution to this debate and confirm that the Newman Government remains strong on its position that it will not sell any assets without a mandate.

Yours sincerely



Mark McArdle MP
Minister for Energy and Water Supply

Cc: tableoffice@parliament.qld.gov.au