

Dear Editor,

Implement the blueprint laid out by Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to fix electricity prices and restore Australia's competitive advantage

The Cane Growing families of our region are calling upon the Federal and State Governments to implement the blueprint laid out by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to fix electricity prices and restore Australia's competitive advantage. Farming families are small business people that happen to farm, yet get no price drop, just more unsustainable pain.

The recommendations from the ACCC Retail Electricity Pricing Inquiry have been languishing on a shelf for almost a year. The 56 recommendations are directed at removing unnecessary costs for electricity users – something we have been crying out for.

The cost of generating electricity is less than 8c/kWh and the cost of delivering it through the powerline network is also less than 8c/kWh – so prices for everyone should be capped at 16c/kWh (cents per kilowatt hour).

Cane Growers across the State have been calling for the development of a Food and Fibre tariff for agricultural electricity users, to reflect the fact that they are generally on uncongested parts of the network.

After seeing their electricity bills rise in excess of 130% over the past decade, the cost of pumping irrigation water has become a serious burden on the profitability of sugarcane farms that irrigate and intensive agriculture across the country, which in turn impacts the viability of our local communities.

Many irrigators face further bill increases in excess of another 50% when they are forced on to standard tariffs mid-2020.

Farming families need changes to the 2020 proposed electricity tariffs, or development and implementation of a separate appropriate and affordable food and fibre electricity tariff for the agricultural sector, that will ensure the sustainability of farming family businesses and Queensland's vital Agriculture sector that feeds and clothes a Nation and the world.

Without these changes farming families that irrigate will continue to suffer the financial and emotional pain that comes from not being able to afford to pump the water to sustain what they produce.

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