

ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS (ENERGY PRODUCTS) AMENDMENT BILL – 7 July 2011

Adjourned debate on second reading. -

(Continued from 23 March 2011.)

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:42): I, too, rise on the opposition's side to support the Electrical Products (Energy Products) Amendment Bill. I note that this bill will introduce minimum energy performance standards and labelling for gas products. I note this is already used in relation to electrical products and, when this bill is enacted, it will ensure that similar standards will apply to gas products.

I would like to give an overview of an issue with gas appliances, especially for people who live in the country. I do not think a place like Coomandook is that far from the big smoke, being about 130 or 140 kilometres from the centre of Adelaide. I went through the process of installing a gas heater at the farm when my father was living there. He was about 86 and I was living down the road in a rented farmhouse. I could tell he was struggling to deal with loading wood into the combustion heater so I said, 'I'm going to fix it, Dad; I'll fix it right up. We will get a gas heater and away we'll go.'

I think it was at Ultimate Heating in Adelaide where I found a good gas heater. We organised it and had it installed, once I found a plumber who would come out from Murray Bridge to help put the flue kit and everything in. Then we hooked it up to the normal outside household gas bottles that weigh about 85 kilos. What we did not know at the time was how much gas this monster would eat.

The Hon. M.F. O'Brien: Put it back on the wood fire.

Mr PEDERICK: Having moved back to the farm in the last 2½ years, I find it very tempting to get the chainsaw out, not just for the wood. The exercise would not hurt either; it is just finding the time. We had twin bottles hooked up outside the lounge room where the gas heater was installed and we found that we would get through one of them in about a fortnight.

Apart from being 86 and a little infirm at the time, as he still is but a little bit older at 91, my dad could not move the bottles. With me being involved in here, it was difficult to be around all the time to shift the bottles. So, I thought I would go through the process of putting in one of those gas bullets that you see at the service stations. That is a difficult exercise to arrange.

You get hold of the gas companies and, for a start, none of them would entertain the idea. I found out what the issue was, and I congratulate Tony Henika from Origin, who finally came on board with me. He said, 'Well, your problem is, Adrian, you're not on a gas delivery route.' For some reason Coomandook may as well be at Birdsville, because the route coming down from the city turns off at Taillem Bend and heads out the Mallee Highway, and the South-East gas delivery route only comes to Coonalpyn, so I am in the black hole. It was an interesting exercise.

I said to Tony Henika, 'Listen, Tony, you tell me how it's going to work. I know that means money,' and it did. Anyway, Tony came up with a gas price per litre so that we could have gas delivered. It is a hell of a lot more than you would pay for gas delivered in the trunk network in the city, but it is probably comparable with the price of buying bottles and hooking them up. You have to have an audit every year. You have to have a safe work ticket, which is fine. I think that is about \$150. Origin found me a little bullet that holds about a tonne of gas legally, and we got that delivered. Then I had to get my fencing contractor to put in all the barriers so you cannot back into it, and I had some old railway iron posts that did the job admirably.

As you can imagine, by now the costs are starting to mount and the chainsaw is looking a lot more attractive, but it does not end there. We got that all worked out, and it was great to have the gas supply for my dad who was living at the farm at the time. We see that copper prices have gone through the roof now, but then we had to plumb the copper into the house from the big tank, which we did. I am not going to tell the house how much it cost me in the end, but I can say that the whole project was a few thousand dollars, which was a few more than I imagined.

What I am getting at is that it will be very helpful, with a bill like this, for people to know the approximate energy use for an appliance so that they can fully evaluate what they need to do when fitting any gas appliances, whether it be combustion heaters, water heaters, or gas stoves, which I believe are certainly better to cook on than electrical stoves. It will certainly help consumers make value decisions when installing gas. Even though it did hurt the hip pocket a bit, it is nice to get up in the morning, hit a button and everything lights up in front of you.

Mr Williams: What are you talking about now?

Mr PEDERICK: I am talking about gas, Mitch. Before we digress, I will leave it there.