

It seems that we were not so wrong after all:

We recently sent out a “Special Bulletin” about our “**A Wake-up Call**” notice that the LNP Government objected to because it was claimed that the Government was still considering its options in relation to the dreaded service fee.

When we put out our “wake-up call” we were basing our notice on information received that one mixed park in the greater Brisbane area was actually charging home owners the \$27.91 service fee and that the government did know about it. This gave us grounds to reasonably assume that the service fee was to become an actuality so we naturally passed this news on to our members.

After the complaint from the government that it was not definite that the service fee would be coming back and was still under consideration, I was asked to issue a formal apology to the Minister and more importantly from our point of view, an apology to our members. Our members know the rest.

However, when one home owner living in the mixed park in the greater Brisbane area read our special bulletin, this home owner was quickly on the phone asking why the hell we were apologising to this government when what we had originally said was true.

Our complainant (home owner) went on to explain the circumstances of how this payment of \$27.91 was being charged and had lodged a formal complaint to the Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) some months ago. The home owner told us that a person from the DHPW had been to the park, visited the home owner and verified that yes, the park operator was charging the \$27.91 service fee but hidden in the electricity usage figures on the invoice.

This is how it was done: The park operator sent out a letter to all home owners in the park informing them that the Government had published the retail electricity prices and in the notice informed that under tariff 11, the price per kilowatt hour would rise from 29.40 cents to 30.82 cents inclusive of GST. The notice also stated that the service fee per metering point would increase from \$16.80 per month to \$27.89 per month also inclusive of GST and the increase would commence in the park from 1 August 2014 account. Here’s the rub, while the individual kilowatt usage was shown in total, when the figures were calculated, the \$27.89 was included and not shown separately. For aged pensioners this could be seen as deceptive and when we checked with other home owners in the park, they believed they were not being charged the \$27.89 service fee, hence the confusion.

This bring us back to our “**Wake-up Call**” notice, were we right or wrong? Do members think that the government will now show the same integrity as your committee and admit they were wrong and that we were right? We leave the answer to you.

David Paton
Chair ARPQ
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