



Speech by

Murray Watt

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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EVERTON ELECTORATE, CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr WATT (Everton—ALP) (12.19 pm): The Bligh government is helping Everton residents save money and save the planet at the same time. In the 20 months that this government has been in power it has stepped up to the two great global challenges of our time, arguably the two greatest challenges the world has ever faced. I am talking about the challenge of dangerous climate change, which poses more of a risk to Queensland than any other state in Australia, and the global financial crisis, which is rewriting all the economic textbooks and is threatening the jobs of millions around the state, around the nation and around the world.

Unlike the opposition, this government believes that it is up to government to help people through the tough times. We are not sticking our heads in the sand hoping that climate change will go away. We are not slashing services and leaving it to the market to work out if someone keeps their job or gets thrown on the scrap heap. This government rolls its sleeves up and does the hard work to offer people a pathway through these challenges.

I would like to outline three services that this government has introduced to help my constituents save money in tight times and save the planet in the process. At the same time, I would like to encourage any of my constituents who have not taken up these opportunities to do so—the sooner the better. The first of those services is the ClimateSmart Home Service.

Ms Jones: A great service.

Mr WATT: A fantastic service. The service costs just \$50 and can save people up to \$250 on their water and energy bills each year. More importantly, the service helps people save a total of up to 20 tonnes of greenhouse gases, which is equivalent to taking four cars off the road for 12 whole months. Included in the ClimateSmart Home Service is an energy audit by a licensed electrician, the installation of a wireless energy monitor, up to 15 free energy-efficient light globes, supplied and installed, a free water and energy efficient showerhead, also supplied and installed, a customised energy and water efficiency plan plus access to an online resource for more information. South-East Queensland residents, including those I represent in Everton, have led the charge to take up this service. Nearly 40,000 services have been completed in South-East Queensland already, with another 15,000 booked to be done in the future.

The second service that I would like to mention is the Solar Hot Water Scheme. Through this program eligible homeowners can access a solar or heat pump hot water system for a payment of \$100 for pensioners and low-income earners and \$500 for other eligible participants. We are currently implementing our election commitment to deliver up to 200,000 affordable hot water systems to households over the next three years, beginning 1 July 2009. Again Everton residents have taken up this offer with gusto. Already over 500 of my constituents have registered their interest in making the change to solar hot water. The offer remains open and I encourage my constituents to ring up and get on board.

The final service I would like to mention is TravelSmart Communities. Like most electorates in South-East Queensland, my constituents have experienced some of the growing pains that stem from our

state's booming economy and population. There are many ways to address the congestion that we do experience from time to time, more roads and more public transport being the most obvious. But we have also addressed the problem in innovative ways, and none are more innovative than the TravelSmart Communities project. This program works directly with householders to provide them with assistance to reduce reliance on cars and encouraging people to use healthier, more environmentally friendly forms of travel such as public transport, walking, cycling and car pooling. But the benefits are even wider than those health and environmental benefits. Those who participate also save money on petrol. Even better, this project has created 200 jobs on Brisbane's northside. Again, northside residents, including those in my electorate—

Ms Jones: And mine.

Mr WATT: And those in my colleague's, the member for Ashgrove, have been enthusiastic participants. Audited results of the northern Brisbane project conducted recently showed that out of 74,500 homes that participated there was a 25,000 tonne reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, a 49 per cent increase in walking, a 58 per cent increase in cycling, a 22 per cent increase in public transport use and a 13 per cent decrease in car use. Put together, these three services are leading the nation in helping Queenslanders save money and save the planet. I know that other states look on with envy when they see what this government is doing to help Queenslanders meet these challenges. Queenslanders can be confident that, although tough times are ahead, this government is right beside them helping them through, and we will continue to do so.