




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Record of Proceedings, 11 October 2017

MOTION: ENERGY COMPANIES, EXECUTIVE BONUSES

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (6.18 pm): It is a pleasure to rise to oppose this motion. It is also a pleasure to hear the thrust of this motion: downward pressure on prices one cent at a time. It is the slow march of the snails. The members opposite claim that they are standing up for Queensland, but it is a saving of one cent a week.

It is also interesting to hear the LNP condemning this so-called air-conditioning plan, which I believe came from them.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I have been giving you messages all afternoon since we resumed. You are now warned under standing order 253A.

Mr WHITING: I find it interesting that the plan of attack this week is to attack a plan that originated from those opposite themselves. What a great strategy! The Palaszczuk government is doing everything it can to put downward pressure on power prices. We have a \$1.16 billion plan which is in stark contrast to the LNP's hollow policy on executive bonuses which will do nothing to reduce Queenslanders' electricity bills.

The LNP's record on energy is crystal clear. Under the LNP, power prices increased by 43 per cent compared to just 1.9 per cent per year under the Palaszczuk government. Those are the facts. Those opposite were fattening up our assets for sale before they were kicked out of government with a history making defeat. If they were sold Queenslanders' power bills would have been far higher today because we would have no control over our energy assets.

Here is another fact: executive bonus payments were much higher under the LNP than they are now. This policy is nothing more than a headline that will have no impact on customers' bills. The last full financial year of the Newman-Nicholls government saw power company executives paid bonuses totalling \$1.3 million. Last financial year under the Palaszczuk government power company executives' bonuses totalled only \$1.043 million. That is a decrease of almost 20 per cent. It is also a fact that with the merging of Energex and Ergon as Energy Queensland we can slash the cost of senior executives by \$3.7 million. When Tim Nicholls was the treasurer and a shareholding minister for Energex and Ergon the total remuneration cost for senior management of these GOCs was \$7.9 million. In 2016-17 we have reduced those remuneration costs down to \$4.2 million.

If the LNP had sold off our assets they would have had no control over executive bonuses. In fact, under the member for Clayfield's plan they would have been even higher. For example, the CEO bonuses of privately owned power businesses ranged from over \$1 million to \$3 million per year. At Spark Infrastructure the CEO has a bonus of more than \$1.2 million with a total pay of \$2.1 million. At Origin the CEO has a bonus or at-risk payments of \$1.9 million with a total pay of \$3.7 million. At AGL the CEO receives long-term and short-term incentive payments of more than \$4.3 million with a total pay of \$6.9 million. These are the types of bonuses Queensland electricity consumers would have to pay under the LNP's former plan or current plan to sell our assets.

Queenslanders are sick of the spin. They are sick of the lack of policy and the lack of direction on energy from both the federal and the state LNP. They want action. They want to know that governments are doing all they can to help reduce prices. The Palaszczuk government, despite the energy mess created by the Abbott and Turnbull governments, is acting. As I said, we have a \$1.16 billion Powering Queensland Plan that is delivering real benefits for Queenslanders.

If those opposite want to direct GOCs to alter their practices why did they not take action to take control of the 45 per cent of revenue that the AER does not control? That is something they did not do in previous years. They just sat on their hands. All they did was blame the previous Labor government. They could have taken action to do that. We have done that. Do not worry about that 45 per cent, let us blame someone else. I therefore oppose this motion.