




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR YEERONGPILLY

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Electricity Prices

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (2.31 pm): The Palaszczuk government is always looking for ways to support low-income Queenslanders, to give a hand up with everyday living expenses. I am pleased to inform the House that electricity savings are coming for some of the community's most vulnerable electricity consumers right across Queensland.

The Palaszczuk government has invested an additional \$170 million over four years to extend the electricity rebate to healthcare cardholders and asylum seekers. This will deliver a \$330 deduction per year for 157,000 additional households to help them manage the costs of their electricity bills. Eligible households will be able to apply for the rebate from their electricity retailer from next week on 1 April 2017, with payments backdated to 1 January this year. I would encourage all members to do what they can to inform their constituents to contact their retailer about this rebate. For low-income earners, \$330 will go a long way towards helping to make ends meet for single-parent families, for students, for the unemployed and for other low-income earners.

The Palaszczuk government is also trialling other ways to assist Queenslanders to reduce their bills. Public housing tenants in detached government owned houses will have access to benefits of rooftop solar power in a new trial. The trial will be undertaken in Woodridge, Rockhampton, Cairns and Lockhart River and collectively will deliver up to six megawatts of new solar PV on up to 4,000 new solar rooftops right across Queensland. Eligible tenants can purchase cheaper solar power from a solar PV system installed at the premises as well as from the grid. I thank the Minister for Housing and Public Works and the member for Springwood for working so closely with me on this great initiative.

In Cairns last week I launched our new Energy Savvy Families program with the member for Barron River. The Palaszczuk government is collaborating with Ergon, the Queensland Council of Social Service and CitySmart to deliver this program which will help regional families save on their electricity bills. Digital meters will be installed at no cost in 5,500 regional homes across Queensland—in Mareeba, Cairns, Townsville, Mount Isa, Charters Towers, Rockhampton, Hervey Bay, Bundaberg, Murgon and Toowoomba. Households will receive up-to-date usage information from their digital meter, with the Queensland Council of Social Service engaging locally based neighbourhood champions who will be on hand to help with additional education and advice. Participants will have access to online resources to help monitor their electricity habits. Importantly, households taking part in this program will be able to pay their electricity bills in smaller, more manageable monthly amounts rather than receiving quarterly bills.

The Palaszczuk government has stabilised electricity prices for households after the 43 per cent increases inflicted by those opposite in their three years with their record majority. We will continue to stand up for ordinary Queenslanders and take real action on electricity prices.