



Speech By  
**Trevor Watts**


**MEMBER FOR TOWOOMBA NORTH**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 November 2019

## ADJOURNMENT

### Toowoomba North Electorate, Gas Usage Charges

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (7.06 pm): I rise to record the frustration and disappointment of my constituents. I have here a petition that has been signed by 300 constituents. It calls on the Minister for Energy to urgently review gas usage charges and the state government subsidies available to pensioners, seniors and low-income earners to help bring urgent price relief to residents across Toowoomba. I table the petition.

*Tabled paper:* Nonconforming petition regarding household gas supply in Toowoomba [2129](#).

I have spoken about this issue before. My constituents continue to be disappointed and are certainly unhappy with the minister's inaction on this issue. In Toowoomba, the meters of thousands of people were read incorrectly. Some bills were three times higher than normal. Others as much as eight times higher than normal. I wrote to the minister. I table my letter, as it clearly outlines that we understood the issues.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 16 September 2019, from the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, Hon. Dr Anthony Lynham, to the member for Toowoomba North, Mr Trevor Watts MP, regarding residential gas supply [2130](#).

The companies sent out someone who was not reading the meters. The minister could not have read my letter as his reply outlines what my constituents should do about the issues raised. I table the minister's response.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 22 July 2019, from the member for Toowoomba North, Mr Trevor Watts MP, to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, Hon. Dr Anthony Lynham, regarding residential gas supply [2131](#).

We needed the minister to intervene. Some of the people affected needed some relief and the ability to spread out their payment over a period of time. They needed to be able to manage their cash flow after receiving three or four very low bills followed by a massive bill. Many of these people are pensioners and self-funded retirees—people who are unable to suddenly magic some extra cash flow to deal with a gas company that unfortunately had employed someone who was not doing their job.

Whilst we have had a few meetings with the companies and have done a lot to try to mitigate the damage, it is disappointing that the minister really took no interest in this matter. Thousands of people in Toowoomba have been affected by this. This issue is ongoing. What people miss is that gas is critical in some Toowoomba homes in winter as it is their heating source. At the moment people's gas bills are low, but in winter people's gas bills are high. People are not budgeting for a high gas bill in the middle of summer, so to suddenly receive one is incredibly distressing for some of these people. Most distressing is the minister's complete lack of interest in trying to reach a solution and resolve some of these issues for my constituents. Again I call on the minister to read the correspondence and to help the constituents.