




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Energy Prices; Gas Supply

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (2.31 pm): I rise to speak about a number of issues plaguing Queensland's energy sector. As we have heard this week, the default market offer for electricity prices will be rising by between 19 per cent and 27 per cent yet this Palaszczuk government and the energy minister, Mick de Brenni, continue to claim that Queenslanders' electricity bills are reducing. The latest rise in wholesale electricity costs will be passed onto consumers and will further exacerbate the cost-of-living crisis that both state and federal Labor governments are imposing on Queensland families.

The Premier's response is to point to her so-called rebate but we must call that out for what it is. The government own the energy assets in Queensland so when you pay more for your power bill it is the government that is the beneficiary. Instead of the government driving down the wholesale prices from the government owned generators, their response is to give a handful of the money that customers have paid back to the customers. The minister has already disclosed that the refund will not equal the price rise. The Premier is pulling the wool over the eyes of Queenslanders with those so-called rebates.

Even the Auditor-General has confirmed that electricity prices are rising, noting in his December report that Queensland saw the steepest increase in the nation. The Auditor-General also confirmed that a lack of supply from unplanned maintenance in power plants such as Callide had been a primary factor in driving up electricity prices. That contradicts Minister de Brenni's comments following the incident at the Callide C power station when he said the incident 'would have no net impact on consumers' electricity prices'. The Palaszczuk government and the minister must stop misleading Queenslanders as to why these prices are the highest in the country.

The Australian Energy Market Operator has just released the Gas Statement of Opportunities, which forecasts a domestic gas shortage in this country. The market intervention by the federal Labor government has driven that shortage, undermining the investment by domestic gas producers. This issue will only get worse and the Palaszczuk government must speak up for Queensland industry and consumers. Experts are already worried about gas shortages, particularly as we approach the winter months. It is likely AEMO will instruct that Queensland gas be sent south, causing further issues for Queenslanders.

Where is the Palaszczuk government on this? Queenslanders deserve to know what the Palaszczuk government is doing to support our domestic gas industry. They also deserve to know what the Premier is doing to speed up the approval processes to allow more gas to come online. The gas shortage is a real issue. It is not a matter of if this is going; this will happen. Queenslanders deserve sustainable, affordable and reliable electricity and some honesty from this government.