




Speech By
Hon. Charis Mullen

MEMBER FOR JORDAN

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CHEAPER POWER (SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL)

 **Hon. C MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (7.46 pm): I am pleased to speak to the Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Bill 2024. I wish to commend the Premier as well as the Deputy Premier and Treasurer for this important commitment to provide a tangible and responsible cost-of-living measure for all of our communities. These days it is rare to speak with anyone who is not affected by rising costs of living—utilities, groceries and everyday essentials. In growing communities like the one I represent, increased interest rates have also had a real impact, with the average household budget becoming more stretched and more families seeking cost-of-living relief.

Some of these things may seem quite subtle. I speak with my local butcher Mal and he tells me that customers have been buying a lot more mince, sausages and cheaper cuts of meat, like chuck steak. Local cafe owner Shay tells me that, whilst they are still getting customers, they are seeing people sharing breakfasts or only purchasing less expensive items on the menu. Some things are more pronounced, with our local community centres reporting more people coming through their doors seeking emergency relief funding or referrals to support organisations. That is why our cost-of-living rebate is so important at this particular time and why this bill will realise an important policy decision of our government.

We have listened to the people of Queensland. We have heard them on the doorstep. We have been speaking with them at our mobile offices and at community events. When they call our offices, they have been telling us that they need assistance. The \$1,000 that every household will receive from our Miles government will make a meaningful difference to many families and individuals. For seniors, pensioners and concession card holders, we also know that, with the additional Queensland electricity rebate, the \$1,372 will mean that those recipients will not pay an electricity bill for the entire financial year, which is welcome relief indeed.

As has been clearly articulated, this cost-of-living rebate is only possible because of our progressive coal royalties. They are critical to our state's revenue mix and our fiscal capacity that enables our state to do things that other states cannot do: to make our natural resources go further to deliver for the people of our state. Our record investment is only possible because of the financial capacity created by progressive coal royalties. If you cut progressive coal royalties then you cut this investment; you cut the capacity to invest in new and productive infrastructure and to ensure the current infrastructure is contemporary and fit for purpose; and you cut the record investments in our health system—investment that means that increasing numbers of Queenslanders in our state can receive the health care they need earlier and closer to home.

It is not just current infrastructure that will get cut. You might reasonably ask: where does the profit go if not to Queenslanders? If it is not going to important cost-of-living measures, to our hospitals, to our schools, to our community centres, to our roads or to the frontline jobs that deliver our services then where does it go? It goes offshore.

The LNP would rather see Queensland's slice of progressive royalties go offshore. They would rather see that money go out of the pockets of their own constituents and out of infrastructure in their own electorates. They would rather make agreements with the resources lobby than make the right decision to ensure Queenslanders get their fair share. We have seen progressive coal royalties work for the people of Queensland since we introduced them. We are seeing them now go into direct cost-of-living relief for all Queenslanders. What we are not seeing is a commitment from those opposite to keep progressive coal royalties into the future. Our communities have warmly welcomed the \$1,000 that will reduce their electricity bills. Along with the Albanese government's \$300 additional rebate, Queenslanders know who they can trust to support them when times are tough—Labor governments. I commend the bill to the House.