




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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CHEAPER POWER (SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL)

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (7.02 pm): I rise to address the debate on the Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Bill 2024. It has been long said that under Labor Queenslanders will always pay more and that Queenslanders can simply not afford to trust the Labor government. Local residents of the electorate of Moggill, and all Queenslanders, are hurting. They are suffering under this state Labor government which has presided over some of the largest cost-of-living pressures in the country—cost-of-living pressures that the Labor state government has created. Over the last year under Labor, Queenslanders have had to endure significant cost-of-living increases, including a 19.9 per cent increase in the cost of electricity, the highest in Australia; a 18.5 per cent increase in insurance costs; as well as an almost seven per cent increase in health costs, again the highest in the nation. Queenslanders have also had to deal with an 8.4 per cent increase in rental costs, which is also the highest in Australia, as well as a 4.2 per cent increase in transport costs. These are the figures which truly underscore the state Labor government's absolute and long-term failure to comprehensively address Queensland's cost-of-living crisis.

As the Liberal National Party state opposition has made clear, the specific measures and temporary cost-of-living support measures contained within this legislation will not be opposed by the Liberal National Party. Right now Queenslanders, including local residents in the electorate of Moggill, need all the support they can get as they struggle with the daily cost-of-living pressures caused by this state Labor government. It is important to remember that this support, whilst welcome, is only temporary. In fact, it is little more than a bandaid solution to address what are significant and long-term structural issues under this state Labor government. What is more, these issues have only been further exacerbated by Labor.

If we specifically look at electricity prices, it is evident that Queenslanders are enduring skyrocketing retail electricity prices due to the mismanagement and chaos of this state Labor government. As I noted earlier, in 2023 retail electricity prices in Queensland rose by almost 20 per cent, which was the highest increase in the nation and three times the national average. Even more shocking, in the two years following the failure of the Callide power plant, from June 2021 to June 2023, underlying power prices increased by 135 per cent in Queensland. The fact of the matter is that we are here because of the shocking mismanagement of the Callide Power Station by this state Labor government. There have been problems with multiple generators at the power station. If skyrocketing power prices are the symptom of Labor's cost-of-living crisis, then undoubtedly one of the main causes has been Labor's long-term failure to adequately invest in critical network infrastructure and maintenance. Whistleblowers have told the Liberal National Party that the state Labor government's chronic mismanagement and maintenance underfunding caused the failure of the Callide C power plant. It was an horrific incident and a catastrophic failure, and we are all thankful that no-one was hurt. This week marks three years since the Callide power plant failure. For three years Queenslanders have had to pay the price, quite literally, for Labor's failure.

As if imposing higher electricity prices during a cost-of-living crisis was not enough, this state Labor government has further insulted Queenslanders not only by failing multiple deadlines to restore the critical Callide C power plant but also through its shameful failure to release its secret report into the catastrophic failure. Queenslanders were promised an independent report by industry expert Dr Sean Brady into what happened and yet the Labor energy minister is refusing to release that independent report and tell Queenslanders the truth about what really happened. Labor is never open, transparent and accountable.

As the Liberal National Party shadow minister for energy and cost of living made clear during her matter of public interest contribution earlier today, this state Labor government is running a protection racket around what truly happened at the Callide power plant. Not only do Queenslanders deserve transparency on Labor's catastrophic Callide failure; they also deserve accountability. Openness and transparency on this matter are critical to Queensland families because we know that with the Callide power plant being out of service there has been a reduction in available electricity supply, further pushing up the electricity bills of Queensland families and businesses. That is not posturing by the Liberal National Party; that comes from both the Queensland Auditor-General and the Queensland Competition Authority.

Last weekend in the electorate of Moggill, the terrific annual Brookfield Show was held. Across three days, from Friday to Sunday, I engaged with thousands of local residents as well as visitors from across South-East Queensland at my dedicated Brookfield Show stall where we talked about the issues and priorities that matter most to them. Both cost of living and Labor's youth crime crisis were raised as major issues. Local residents continue to raise with me their alarm at their increasing power bills. I have had residents share with me the great lengths to which they are going to consume as little electricity as possible in an effort to drive their bills down. In one incident at the Brookfield Show, an elderly resident told me they had made the decision to forego additional heating this winter because they simply can no longer afford additional increases to their power bills.

Queenslanders have had enough. Saving Queenslanders from paying for Labor's failures is a priority for the Liberal National Party because it is the priority for Queenslanders. When it comes to driving down cost-of-living pressures, the Liberal National Party will reduce Labor government waste and stop project cost blowouts rather than hitting Queenslanders with higher taxes and fees. We will deliver better services and infrastructure for every taxpayer dollar invested and we will also identify opportunities to reduce fees and charges. Importantly, we will drive down electricity costs by properly maintaining our power plants. The Liberal National Party will drive down insurance costs by reducing the impact of crime on premiums, as well as by investing in natural disaster mitigation. The Liberal National Party will drive down transport costs by reducing traffic congestion. All of this is important to reducing the cost of living for all Queenslanders. However, we know that under Labor Queenslanders will always pay more. Local residents in the electorate of Moggill simply cannot afford another term of this Labor government. That is why in October of 2024 Queenslanders need to show Labor the door because Labor does not have long-term solutions to address the cost-of-living crisis here in Queensland.