




Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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ADJOURNMENT

Cost of Living, Electricity Rebate

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.27 pm): I have said before in this House that I am laser focused on cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders, especially those living in my electorate of Mount Ommaney. Of course, members can imagine how excited I was to wake up this morning, just like every other Mount Ommaney local and every Queenslander, to hear the exciting news that every household will be getting \$1,000 off their power bills from 1 July this year. That is fantastic news for households that are battling the rising cost of living and I know it will be a huge relief to every Queensland household. There is more on the table for seniors card holders, and small businesses as well, who will receive a different rebate.

The Miles government will not be stopping there. I am proud to sit on the Supermarket Pricing Select Committee. Last week the committee travelled to Bundaberg and Cairns for regional hearings. We heard from one farmer, Judy, who gave really illuminating evidence on the huge volumes of waste that the supermarkets are currently creating. Judy spoke about the impossible beauty standards of the supermarkets. She showed us examples of fresh produce that are wasted and rejected by the supermarkets, such as capsicums that have too many folds or bananas that are too small or not curved enough.

The Bundaberg mayor mentioned the small amounts of 'ugly' produce—I say 'ugly' because there is nothing wrong with it—sold by the major supermarkets, which is just virtue signalling. It is not a genuine attempt to sell the large volumes of less aesthetically pleasing stock, which taste just as good and are just as nutritious. At a time when almost every family I know is cutting back—they are changing their shopping behaviours and are even changing where they shop in order to lower their bills—it seems to me that selling more 'ugly' produce would be just one way supermarkets could make a real difference to Queenslanders doing it tough. We heard about the issue of wastage through over-ordering. I was absolutely shocked and devastated to hear one of our witnesses, Judy, say that some growers are forced to throw out 30 per cent to 40 per cent of their produce because it is not up to supermarket specs.

On a side note, I wish to comment on the excellent collegiate relationship the committee has developed. I know all members of the committee are driven to try to strive for real outcomes for Queenslanders dealing with rising grocery prices.

It is my opinion that the reason the supermarkets are able to get away with this behaviour is that there is a duopoly. In Queensland, the big two control 65 per cent of the market and Aldi, while a welcome addition, controls just 10 per cent. I believe that, until there is more diversity in the grocery market, there is no reason for the supermarkets to change their tactics, and that does not help anyone. Our next hearing is tomorrow. I look forward to hearing from the stakeholders about how we can help Queenslanders get a fair deal.