




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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CHEAPER POWER (SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL)

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (8.20 pm): The excitement in my community among the residents who are getting a \$1,000 rebate on their next electricity bill is overwhelming. They are so excited. Families in my region work very hard and my region is quite often able to boast the lowest rates of unemployment across the state. Although there is a high rate of employment, people are experiencing rate hikes, affecting the cost of their house payments; their rents are high and their grocery prices are increasing. They are finding it harder to make ends meet. They need cost-of-living relief and that is what we are doing. Already we are providing free kindy and free TAFE and we are also increasing the number of free courses at TAFE. We are helping out wherever we can.

Whether I am on the phones or out at a street stall, people are telling me that the electricity rebate is coming at the right time. Some people are so pleased that they are close to tears.

Mrs Frecklington: What's going to happen next year?

Mrs GILBERT: The member opposite should get out and talk to them. They are really happy about it.

It is Labor governments that have their finger on the pulse and their ear to the ground. We are picking up on the important issues of those mums and dads and the average people out there. We know that households need a break. Lyn is 67. She said, 'You've got no idea how important and timely this \$1,000 is for my family. This has just saved us.' Karina is a single mum. She works part-time and she is also a part-time uni student. She said, 'This will make it easier to make sure that my kids do not miss out.' Importantly, the existing \$372 in electricity rebates provided to pensioners and concession card holders will also continue to be paid to those eligible households on top of the \$1,000. That means that our vulnerable households will get a total rebate of \$1,372, and that is not all. Our federal Labor government is supporting Queenslanders now the federal budget has been delivered by Treasurer Chalmers. The state's \$1,000 energy payment with the federal Labor government's rebate of \$300 is giving families breathing space, and our pensioners and concession card holders will get a grand total of \$1,672. Some households will not pay any electricity bills for a whole year.

Some people are fearful that the energy support payments will mean increased taxes. No. When I explain to them where they are coming from, they just do a bigger and bolder happy dance. How great it is that the benefits of the resources that are being mined out of the ground in Queensland are able to go back to Queensland households because of the Labor government's progressive coal royalties. Money that would have gone into the hands of multinational shareholders is flowing right back into the household budgets of Queenslanders.

Some people out there are saying that the payment should be means tested or only go to low income families or families on welfare. I have found that there are families out there from all walks of life who normally would never turn up to charities asking for help and those charities are telling me that these people are turning up with their hand out. They are in jobs, but they have overcommitted financially and they are doing it tough. This is the right thing to do to make sure that this money goes to every household. How great is it that this money is coming from our share of our minerals. I support the bill.