




Speech By  
**Linus Power**

**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 May 2024

### **CHEAPER POWER (SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL)**

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (5.41 pm): Listening carefully to the contributions of the two opposition members, I heard all sorts of things, but I heard very little about the Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Bill 2024. It is only six pages long. It is obviously six pages too complex for them. The deputy chair and I carefully prepared a report on the bill. It is a little bit longer, but it uses simple and clear words so that people can follow it. I urge members opposite who will speak in this debate to speak to the report. They seem desperate to not use the words 'rebates' or 'cheaper power' because they will not deliver either.

I rise to support the Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Bill because, fundamentally, it helps the residents of Logan with household costs. The rebates are \$1,000 for Queensland householders. We know now that Jim Chalmers' Commonwealth Labor budget adds \$300. Of course, there is \$325 for small businesses. As I said, this payment will occur by way of a rebate or a credit on household and small business power bills. To take this action, the Treasurer introduced the supplementary appropriation in accordance with section 35 of the Financial Accountability Act 2009.

In the Cost of Living and Economics Committee's hearings we heard the desire of some social welfare organisations to means-test this important assistance. In response, Treasury correctly pointed out that household data is not held by Queensland Treasury and that the application process would take an enormous amount of processing time and be high cost—a cost that would not help Queensland households. This would have further delayed payments but, importantly, the application process would have also meant that some of our most vulnerable would have missed out. I understand where they were coming from. They want to help Queenslanders and they endorse the principles of helping out Queenslanders through this time, but the original rebate to all households is very important. We also note that there is an additional \$327 rebate that many Queenslanders can apply for but have not yet applied for. I urge the residents of Logan who have a pensioner card, a Health Care Card, a Services Australia card or a Department of Veterans' Affairs Veteran Gold Card to make that application as that \$372 rebate is additional help that we want to provide.

More disturbingly, there were submitters who support the LNP position. There were LNP connected organisations such as the Australian Institute for Progress which we have heard is run by a former vice-president of the Liberal Party as well as has as a board member no less than their hero, Campbell Newman. Of course, the LNP's favourite economist, Adept Economics, advanced the LNP position that a share of returns from progressive coal royalties from publicly owned assets should not be returned to Queenslanders. That is the LNP position. We know they are quietly sneaking around with multinational corporations and the Resources Council and making promises that will be paid for by ordinary Queenslanders.

I have heard LNP members behind me say that returning these royalties to households through a rebate is a terrible idea. They describe it as a 'sugar hit'. We heard another member describe it as a 'cash splash'. They want to run it down as much as possible. They do not want to speak about it, in the case of the member for Toowoomba South, or run it down, which is the case for those on the backbench, because they are preparing to cut it. Our committee report states—

... 'Funding for this initiative is supported by the new progressive coal royalties, ensuring Queenslanders receive a fair and reasonable return for the ... state's valuable and limited resources'.

That is absolutely right. In a time of need, this government gets it. Household budgets are under pressure. We have kept the assets and the resources in public hands. That means we can take this action to help Queenslanders.

I was in a line at the shops and asked people if they appreciated the cost-of-living rebates. A woman said that it was her husband who paid the electricity bill. He had heard about it on the radio that morning and his response was, 'Hallelujah.' No doubt, that response is on the lips of thousands of residents in Logan. I have advocated hard for cost-of-living relief. This Miles government gets it. The Treasurer gets it. We are doing what we can do to help Queenslanders and we are doing it now. We are voting for it today.

The other question Logan residents are asking is: are these payments at risk? That is a very serious and dangerous question, because the answer is yes. The LNP has consistency railed against this help. These types of payments have been consistently railed against by LNP members in this House. We have heard them say that they were not the thing to do. We know that these types of payments are at risk. This morning we heard the shadow Treasurer set the groundwork for cuts. These will be one of the first measures to be chopped if the LNP ever attains government.

We saw the LNP increase costs as part of its strategy to fatten up assets for sale. Electricity assets are also at risk because they have history. To quote the member for Toowoomba South, 'Look at their past performance and you will see what will they do in the future.' These assets are ours. We get a return on them. We can deliver to Queenslanders in a time of need. We know that they are at risk from the LNP because its members refuse to use the words 'cheaper power' or 'rebates' and will talk about anything else. I am for helping Queenslanders with the cost of living at a household level.