




Speech By  
**Melissa McMahon**

**MEMBER FOR MACALISTER**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 May 2024

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

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (5.57 pm): After that meandering journey through the mind of the member for Mermaid Beach, I rise to speak in support of the Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Bill 2024. We all know the pressures that are facing household budgets across the country. I can advise members that it is acutely felt in my electorate, as it is anywhere else.

Over the last few weeks I have had the opportunity to speak to families at Edens Landing and Beenleigh and pensioners at Eagleby. All are eagerly awaiting the effect of this bill—the \$1,000 electricity rebate for households and the \$1,372 rebate for seniors and pensioners. Treasury estimates that, given the average householder's electricity bill, many Queenslanders may not pay anything on their first electricity bill in the financial year 2024-25 and may not pay another electricity bill until 2025. That was before the federal budget allocated an additional \$300 over the next year in electricity bill relief. This bill provides the biggest cost-of-living relief of any Australian jurisdiction. This is real relief. Queenslanders are going to look at their electricity bill in the third quarter this year and many are going to see it in credit. There is nothing quite like that initial feeling of dread when a bill arrives in your letterbox, or inbox as the case may be, and then that palpable feeling of relief when you look at the bottom line and you realise you do not have to pay it because there is no outstanding amount.

I know there has been considerable talk about whether this measure should be means tested and that this is not targeted sufficiently, but the issue was addressed during committee hearings. Treasury advised that the Queensland government 'does not hold, nor will the federal government provide, income details in relation to individuals', and therefore the 'government does not have access to the income data needed for further rebate targeting'. As mentioned by the member for Mermaid Beach, it is not that we need to spend more time or that we have the capacity; that information is just not available here in Queensland. Is the member inferring that all Queenslanders should provide the state government with their income data and that we should provide their income data straight to electricity providers? That is not feasible; it is not manageable. The bureaucracy involved in doing that and making sure income data is correct is too unwieldy and would take away from the money that is needed to be delivered into the hands of Queensland householders. The reality is that it is a great idea in theory but it is not able to be practically applied in a timely manner and without the bureaucracy needed to verify and check the veracity of income data in order to ensure it was appropriately targeted. Besides, we all know that those with means and money are more than capable of appearing to have a low taxable income when it is of financial benefit to them.

This is a tried and tested measure of delivering cost-of-living relief. The fact that pensioners and healthcare cardholders receive an additional \$372 rebate means that vulnerable Queenslanders are going to get more support under this bill than Clive Palmer. On top of that, the small business electricity rebate of \$325 will continue for around 205,000 eligible small businesses. This has now been matched by the federal government in this year's federal budget, taking the small business rebate to \$750 for

eligible small businesses. I would like to point out to the member for Mermaid Beach that those small business owners generally also have homes and receive electricity bills at home, so it is not just the small business relief they are receiving. They are receiving other relief as well.

This is not just for voters. It is for households, including households of people who are not voters. This is for all Queenslanders regardless of whether you vote or not, regardless of whom you vote for. Passing this bill now gives certainty and allows businesses and families to plan their next financial year. This bill will provide much needed relief for everyday Queenslanders. We know they are doing it tough. We know that, while billions of dollars are being made from Queensland resources and those profits are largely going offshore, measures like our coal royalties are ensuring that largesse can make its way down to Queensland mums and dads and pensioners. That is what Labor governments do.

If the member for Mermaid Beach is so ashamed of this 'pork-barrelling' and 'sugar hit' and is of the opinion that this is not going to help with the cost of living, then I assume he will be voting against it. Either that or he does not have the principles to stand behind what he says in this House and is just here to waste time, grandstand and not impact those who need it. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mrs McMahon, adjourned.