




Speech By  
**Robert Skelton**

**MEMBER FOR NICKLIN**

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

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (7.09 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Miles government's Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Bill 2024. We know that Queenslanders are struggling with national and global cost-of-living pressures. While this House cannot exactly influence global supply chains or intervene in overseas conflicts, we can absolutely pull every lever available to us as a state government to help with the cost of living. Our cheaper power bill will do exactly what it says on the tin—make power cheaper for all Queenslanders. It delivers a \$1,000 credit to every household in the state with an electricity account. These are the biggest power bill savings Queensland families have ever seen and make up part of our upcoming budget which will be the biggest cost-of-living budget in Queensland's history. These savings have been made even bigger after the Albanese government's recent budget announcement, meaning that every household in Queensland will receive \$1,300 off their bill. If you are a senior or a concession card holder, you are eligible for a further \$372.20. This means that most vulnerable households will get a total of \$1,672 off their electricity bill. This means that the majority of households in Queensland will not be paying for electricity until at least next year.

Along with the cost-of-living help for households, our cheaper power bill will deliver a \$325 rebate to all small business accounts in the state, with an additional \$325 from the federal government. Broadly speaking, one would be hard-pressed to find any genuine critics of this policy. It is sensible cost-of-living relief funded by taxing the big coal companies.

On this side of the House we are in agreement that Queenslanders should reap the benefits of their resources, but, unfortunately, even on such an uncontroversial point we find no agreement from those opposite. Let us take a look at their record on coal royalties. It is a tale in three headlines. We will start from June 2023 when the member for Broadwater backed progressive coal royalties. In last year's budget reply speech the Leader of the Opposition made a half-baked non-committal to retaining coal royalties. He called coal royalties a betrayal of Queensland families but still supported them. Even this was a bridge too far for some of the member's colleagues.

This brings us to the second story. Just over a month later, the member for Burleigh was asked in estimates if he supports coal royalties. His answer—one that our federal colleagues have become intimately familiar with in following opposition leader Dutton—no. The member for Burdekin took it a step further in saying—

We have given a commitment that we will sit down with the Queensland Resources Council ... these mining companies and we will genuinely consult with them before we make any decision on coal royalty hikes and changes.

Is it any wonder that this story concludes with the LNP leaving the door open to changes? It took barely three months for those opposite to go from a half-baked commitment to keeping coal royalties to promising that will they will consult with the coal companies about them—not with households, families, businesses or the Queenslanders that these royalties benefit but the companies being made to pay for them. We will be hearing a lot of noise from those opposite, a lot of vague posturing on the economy

and waffling about honestly, but Queenslanders know what this is really about: the LNP sucking up to the resources industry in the hopes that it can buy the next election. As long as this government remains a Labor government, we will always back coal royalties and will always be there for Queenslanders. I commend this bill to the House.