




Speech By  
**Hon. Scott Stewart**

**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 May 2024

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

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources and Critical Minerals) (9.33 pm): I rise to speak to the Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Bill 2024. I am proud to be part of the Miles government that is directly helping Queenslanders with their power bills. This bill will do exactly what it says on the cover: it will provide cheaper power bills to Queenslanders, meaning every single household will receive \$1,000 off their bill. Things like grocery prices and interest rates are putting pressure on people, so it is important that we help relieve that pressure, and that is exactly what this bill will do. The direct \$1,000 rebate coming from this government is complemented by the federal government's \$300 electricity rebate. This helps build on our nation-leading cost-of-living relief.

We can support all Queenslanders in this way for two reasons, which I am very happy and very proud to talk about. This rebate from the Miles Labor government is being paid for through our progressive coal royalties. Our progressive coal royalties make sure Queenslanders are given a fair share of the resources which belong to them, which means this government can give people that \$1,000 off their power bills.

We know people across Queensland are doing it tough, and the Miles government is there to support them with cost-of-living measures like this rebate. The only way we can do that is because of our progressive coal royalties. We know that the LNP do not back them and want to hand back billions of dollars to the multinational mining companies. That means there will be a budget black hole and it is Queenslanders who will suffer.

We also know that the LNP want to sell off our public assets. It is only this government that backs keeping our assets in public hands and we know those opposite certainly want to sell those. We know for a fact that those opposite wanted to sell Ergon. We know that under the LNP, power prices went up by 43 per cent and bills in regions went up by \$600 in just three years. By keeping our energy assets in public hands, we are able to help all Queenslanders with their power bills through the cost-of-living rebate. We are committed to keeping energy assets in the state's hands so that we can return dividends to Queenslanders to help them with their cost-of-living relief. The fact that we keep Ergon Energy in public hands also means that we can help regional Queenslanders.

Under the Community Service Obligation, in 2023-24 this government provided \$540 million to regional Queenslanders to help ensure people in the regions pay prices comparable to those in South-East Queensland. I will say that again: under the Community Service Obligation, we provide regional Queenslanders with funds to the tune of \$540 million annually to ensure people in the regions pay prices comparable to those in South-East Queensland. This is another way that we are helping with direct cost-of-living relief. If Ergon was sold off, as the LNP want to do, and have tried to do before, regional customers in places like Townsville could be slugged with bills 20 per cent higher than those in the south-east corner. It is this government that is backing all Queenslanders, including those in regions, with lower power bills, and we can only do that because of our progressive coal royalties, along with the fact that we will not sell our public assets to the highest bidder, unlike those opposite.

This bill locks in expenditure of our \$1,000 rebates to help people who are struggling, and I am proud to be part of the Miles Labor government entrenching this through Queensland's parliament. I commend the bill to the House.