

## QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 10

asked on Tuesday, 6 February 2007

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**MR FOLEY** ASKED THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND ENERGY (MR WILSON)—

QUESTION:

With reference to a constituent who is a carer for persons with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and as heat can transiently increase symptoms of MS, living in air conditioned residences helps reduce symptoms and control the living environments, but increases electricity costs dramatically –

Will he introduce rebates or reductions on tariffs for MS sufferers and other heat affected people to enhance their quality of life?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for his question.

I can only begin to appreciate the burdens, both financial and otherwise living with a disability such as multiple sclerosis places on individuals, their families and their carers.

Under Section 90 of the *Electricity Act 1994*, I am responsible for setting the State-wide uniform electricity prices to be charged to non-contestable (franchise) electricity customers.

In setting the State-wide uniform electricity tariffs, the Queensland Government takes into account a variety of factors, including increases in the cost of supply, the level of subsidy provided by the Government to customers in regional Queensland, regional development issues and the impacts of any proposed tariff changes on customers.

The Government pays a Community Service Obligation payment to electricity Retailers to cover the difference between the revenue received from the State-wide uniform tariff and the cost of supply. For the 2006-07 financial year, the Department has budgeted \$380 million for these Community Service Obligation payments.

The Queensland Government also provides two types of concessions to specifically assist certain classes of customers with the cost of electricity.

Under the Electricity Rebate Scheme, eligible pensioners and seniors receive a rebate of up to \$9.85 (\$10.84 inclusive of GST) per billing month off their home electricity accounts. For the 2006-07 financial year, approximately \$64 million has been budgeted for the Electricity Rebate Scheme.

Under the Electricity Life Support Concession Scheme, a concession of up to \$22.12 per month is paid directly to eligible persons who use certain electrical home based life support machines provided by Queensland Health.

These specific electricity concessions are in addition to various other concessions provided by the Queensland Government across various portfolios to a wide range of recipients including pensioners, seniors, veterans, carers, people with a disability, sole parents, students and disadvantaged families.