

## QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1043

asked on Thursday, 16 June 2011

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**MR SHINE** ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENERGY AND WATER UTILITIES  
(MR ROBERTSON)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise in what manner will measures in this year's budget relevant to his portfolio benefit Toowoomba?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is increasing energy rebates and concessions to give cost of living relief to Toowoomba families from rising electricity prices.

Electricity and gas rebates will rise from 1 July 2011 for pensioners, low income households and Queenslanders with special medical needs.

The Electricity Rebate and the Reticulated Natural Gas Rebate are available to Queensland pensioners, seniors and other eligible concession card holders and appear as a credit on your electricity or reticulated natural gas bill.

The Electricity Rebate will increase by \$14.25 to \$230.46 per year, and the Reticulated Natural Gas Rebate will increase by \$2.19 to \$63.40 per year.

The Electricity Life Support Concession Scheme provides financial assistance with electricity costs to seriously ill Queenslanders who use home-based oxygen concentrators or kidney dialysis machines.

The concession for consumers using oxygen concentrators will increase by \$29.06 to \$469.36 per year, and the concession for consumers using home kidney dialysis machines will increase by \$19.46 to \$314.31 per year.

The Medical Cooling and Heating Electricity Concession Scheme helps low income consumers with specific medical conditions, such as Multiple Sclerosis, minimise the impact of rising electricity prices.

These people are forced to use air-conditioning year round to maintain a stable core body temperature and prevent their medical condition worsening.

The Medical Cooling and Heating Electricity Concession Scheme will increase by \$14.25 to \$230.46 per year.

Information about rebate and concession eligibility is available by telephoning 1800 460 849.

The Queensland Government has also removed the Community Ambulance Cover Levy. This represents around \$113 in savings per year to every electricity account holder in Toowoomba who would otherwise be liable for the levy.

The Queensland Government is committed to doubling Queensland's renewable energy over the next five years. Queenslanders from all regions are eligible to apply for both the Solar Hot Water Rebate and the Solar Bonus Scheme.

The Solar Hot Water Rebate is helping make solar hot water affordable by offering a rebate to assist households replace their existing electric hot water system. A \$600 rebate is available for applicants on the installation of an eligible solar hot water system or heat pump. This rebate is increased to \$1000 for pensioners and low income earners.

More than 320 Toowoomba residents have received solar rebates worth a collective \$233,000 since the scheme started making payments on 1 July 2010, and the budget supports the continuation of this rebate into the 2011–12 financial year

The Solar Bonus Scheme is a feed-in tariff paid to residential and small business customers using less than 100 megawatt hours of electricity per year. Eligible customers are paid for the surplus electricity generated from solar photovoltaic systems that is exported into the Queensland grid after the household or business load is met. The scheme pays customers 44 cents per kilowatt hour for any excess electricity exported to the grid.

Through the Solar Bonus Scheme, the average customer operating a 1.5 kW solar power system could save over \$450 a year on their electricity bill just by using less electricity from the grid. This figure could be even higher if the customers solar panels are generating excess electricity that is exported to the electricity grid.

Ergon Energy is undertaking several projects on the electricity distribution network to ensure a safe, reliable and efficient electricity supply for the benefit of the businesses and households of Toowoomba and to support the growth of the region.

Ergon Energy is proposing to build three new substations and to refurbish three existing substations to support the area. In total, \$163.7 million will be spent on these projects with \$11.42 million being spent in the 2011–12 financial year.