

14 September 2012

Select Committee on Electricity Prices

I would like to bring it to the enquiry's notice that electricity prices over the last 3 or so years have risen here in NSW almost 70% Pensioners like ourselves and people on low incomes are struggling to keep ahead of rising prices from all comers and we keep being told to cut down usage. We had electricity audit done last year and were told then there was nothing further he could advice us to cut down on as we are already pared to the bone. We have all energy efficient lightbulbs throughout the house and only one bulb in each room. We use neither electric heating nor air-conditioning, cook on an electric stove but seldom use the oven as that is too expensive using stove top or microwave instead, we both take one minute showers and I follow my husband into the shower to save waste. Exactly how are we supposed to cut down any more? Eat our meals raw or eat in the middle of the night? Give up watching television at night? Surely this is not something people should be reduced to. We have installed solar panels as we thought that would save us from having to pay power bills again and it has managed to keep us ahead but the latest rise will swallow up our credit and we will be back to paying power bills again. We can survive but I wonder how other pensioners with no other income and rent to pay can possibly manage.

It is fine for politicians in their ivory towers safely earning in excesss of \$1000 per week and eating their government subsidised meals and using free transport. When costs go up they award themselves a huge payrise. What are the ordinary mortals to recieve to cover the costs of the carbon tax? A measly \$10 which will all be taken by the direct power rise and will not take into account the knock on effect caused by this tax. Not forgetting that as soon as the government gives pensioners any sort of increase every utiility and service decides it is time to raise there prices by the same percentage so we end up not better off but worse off. Where will it end?

Not only this but if more people cut down their electricity usage the power companies get less income so then they put the price up again. This is a never ending merry go round. Why can't politicians understand this?

Finally even if we used no power whatsoever the service fee charged for being connected is high and rising all the time.

In despair and holding out no hope anything will change as a result of this submission.

Yours faithfully,

Jan Turner