



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2024-2025

Ms Nicole Lawder MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),
Miss Laura Nuttall MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS

Asked by: Ms Elizabeth Lee MLA

Addressed to: WEER

Redirected to: Treasurer

Reference: Uncorrected Hansard Transcript [Page 48-49]

Hearing Date: 24 July 2024

QTON lodgement date: 24 July 2024

Answer Due Date: 30 July 2024

MS LEE: Yes, no worries. But just in terms of the actual rebate itself, just confirming that it has been 750 and we have had a couple of one-off \$50 increases. That has happened for how many years in a row now, Mr Rutledge?

Mr Rutledge: I will take that one on notice, Ms Lee. But I think the minister's earlier point, I think the utilities rebate in its various forms has always been considered by the government amongst other activities. So certainly last year and this year, the Commonwealth Government provided direct involvement to all consumers. We, last year, the ACT Government matched that 350 on top of the also 800. We also run a hardship program with our energy providers for them to self-identify or identify clients that are facing hardship.

So, previous it has been in and around \$100,000 for ActewAGL to help them with their hardship program. This year, it is \$300,000, so there is that as well. The other thing, that when people are in real hardship and they get into deep debt, they often go to ACAT, and that see large waiving, or often sees a waiving of debt, which again, that expense comes to government. So there are a number of measures in place. I think the ACT is unique to other jurisdictions in that we provide it via the electricity, or based on electricity, because then the tenants get it, and we provide the whole amount, whether or not you are—and this year it has been renamed to the energy, water and gas, but you receive the full rebate whether or not you are an energy-only customer—electricity-only, where in other jurisdictions, they might have a gas concession and have an electricity concession.

We have one concession, which is more generous than in other jurisdictions because of that, and making it more accessible to renters particularly.

Mr Rattenbury: So, I have found the right part of my notes now. The concession is \$800 this year. The budget included expanding the utilities concession eligibility criteria to include anyone with a Commonwealth Health Care Card, and so that was actually 12,000 more households, Mr Rutledge said 1,200, but it is actually 12,000, and it does include an additional payment of \$50 in 2023-2024, and that was the one-off. I think I have covered your questions now, hopefully.

MS LEE: In terms of the rate without the one-off \$50 increases, \$750, what year was it first set at \$750? How long has it been at \$750?

Mr Rattenbury: I will have to check that one. I will take that on notice. Or you might ask the Treasurer in the subsequent session.

Andrew Barr MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The base amount of the Utilities Concession, now called the Electricity, Gas and Water Rebate, was increased to \$750 per year in 2021-22. The total rebate has been greater than \$750 in each year since 2021-22, with temporary additions in five of the last six financial years varying from \$50 to \$250.

In addition to the Utilities concession and EGWR rebate, there are also decisions made by the Government regarding surplus revenue from the Large-scale Feed-in Tariff scheme as well as rebates from the Commonwealth Government.

In 2023-24, the Commonwealth Government also provided an additional \$175 to ACT households eligible for the Utilities Concession, and the ACT Government contributed an average of \$152 to all households in additional support.

In 2024-25, the Commonwealth will provide a \$300 energy bill rebate to all households. The ACT Government is also returning \$61.3 million in surplus revenue from the Large-scale Feed-in Tariff scheme to households. This has reduced the annual electricity bill for a typical household by an estimated \$129 in 2024-25.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2024-2025

Signature: 

Date: **2.9.24**

By the Treasurer, Andrew Barr MLA