

From: Rachel Burnett [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 27 February 2014 3:09 PM
To: General Electricity Address
Subject: Electricity Price Hikes

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am sure that I won't be the first or last person you will be hearing from in regards to this. But hopefully I have a voice and my voice counts for something!

Why does an electricity company like Ergon Energy increase the cost of electricity when it has the monopoly on our area?

Our family like many in Townsville are defence families. We live in DHA homes. We don't have the luxury of putting on solar energy. My husband who is a SNCO earns less than [REDACTED] a year. He has 25 troops under him that are on [REDACTED] or less a year and this is across all defence musterings. We live in the tropics not by choice but by circumstance. We have an expectation that we have access to power to cool ourselves down from the oppressive heat and humidity when we so choose to. As it is we put off using air con until absolutely possible. But even that doesn't help.

We were paid today. After paying bills we are left with [REDACTED] to buy groceries for the fortnight. I have an electricity bill of [REDACTED], as I pay [REDACTED] a fortnight via BPay out of our wages we now only owe [REDACTED]. So after I've spent [REDACTED] on groceries this fortnight where do I come up with the money for my power bill? For the record we have three people in our house. Only three air cons get used in the evenings. We have energy saving devices. We have gas hot water. We don't have a clothes dryer. We don't have flood lights. We don't have a pool. I only wash clothes once a week with my 4.5 star energy rated washing machine. Our air cons are kept at 25 degrees. We turn stand by power off. During the week, I am the only one at home. We only watch one TV at a time. My husband and daughter use laptops.

I belong to our local community group via FB and there are many people who have bills way over the \$1000 mark. People just don't have that money sitting around, when is Ergon going to get that? Ergon Energy recently advertised new jobs in its call centre. I know because I applied for one, the money they were paying was awesome. When I received my power bill, all I could think of was this extra rise is because they have just employed all these new people because business is booming!

In NSW you can choose your electricity provider, when you connect your mobile phone or home phone you can choose your provider. The different providers give the public the option to shop around and get the best deals they can according to their financial situation. Unfortunately electricity is a necessity not a luxury item. But as consumers we are paying luxury item prices. And as a necessity we should also have the choice to choose who we have power with and if we can't then the government should step in and regulate the prices so that it is affordable to everyone. What happens when we can't pay our bills? Will they turn our power off? Do they care? Of course not. It's communism on a new level!

The rich get richer and the poor stay poor.

Most Kindest Regards,

Rachel Burnett
[REDACTED]