

We The People

Program 91

The Shocking Truth



Down through history many people have made small steps toward understanding electricity. The most famous however are Faraday, Watt, Tesla, Ampere, Bell and Edison. Social critic, George Carlin observed that Electricity is just “organised lightening” and that’s actually spot on. Thomas Edison said, “I will make electricity so cheap that only the rich can afford to burn candles”. Now the rest is history and currently we rely absolutely on electricity every day and we take it for granted. It’s an astonishing force produced by steam, wind, tide, sunlight and chemistry. It involves magnetism and a sleight of hand by physics.

Now enter the politicians and bureaucrats who generate very little in my view except pain and cost. Because of Beattie, Bligh, Gillard and Rudd we are facing ever increasing power costs. I see in the news we are about to be slugged another 23% for power and while it’s true Premier Newman has inherited a poisoned chalice he must also realise we cannot pay endlessly and be taxed into oblivion. It’s the carbon tax, state and federal debt levels, infrastructure costs and a population growing unnecessarily which will only generate more costs across the board. To this add union demands and we have unprecedented rises in electricity costs. Today however I want to describe some pure stupidity and political incompetence as a major factor in electricity prices.

I had heard that the various awards for employees and sub contractors in the Energex power game in Queensland were over the top so I made it my business to review the facts with some riveting reading. What I found beggars belief and must at least be illuminated here in simple terms to alert listeners to one reason the government wants you to pay for the shocking truth. Ongoing or recurring costs are a noose around our necks and the Energex Union Collective Agreement in place is so onerous as to be unaffordable and a serious threat to power affordability. Here are just some highlights for your consideration which Energex workers may receive thanks to selfish unions.

- No forced retrenchments.
- Weekly skills allowance
- Substation test allowance.
- Weekly locality allowance.
- Tool allowance
- On call allowance
- Construction site allowance.
- A disability allowance
- An ability allowance
- Substation allowance
- Wet clothes allowance.
- Locality allowance
- Flexible work hours allowance
- An allowance if dust is blowing on site, muddy conditions, climbing stairs or towing a trailer.
- First aid certificate allowance
- Telephone allowance.
- Hardship allowance
- Recovery allowance
- Public holiday meal allowances.

.....and how about

- Weekend penalty rates.
- Shift loadings.
- Career counseling.
- An income insurance plan
- Resume assistance.
- Early Separation pay of 26 weeks.
- Taking a call at home from work is one hours overtime for each call.
- Working during a meal break is at double time.
- A Rest Pause of 20 minutes each morning at full pay.
- Annual agricultural/horticultural show day leave on full pay.
- Recall rate of double time for at least 4 hours.
- If working OT for more than one hour a crib time of 30 minutes is taken.
- If planned OT is cancelled 4 hours OT is paid.
- 5 weeks annual leave if OT is worked during the year.
- Annual leave loading
- A 13 weeks additional sick leave for long term employees.
- Amazingly, illness on annual leave can be converted to sick leave.

.....Now Lets not forget

- Bereavement leave
- Long service leave.
- Adoption leave.
- Maternity leave.
- Paternity leave.
- Parental leave.
- Cultural leave
- Concessional leave.
- Special circumstances leave.
- Unbelievably, Unions to be notified if Energex uses contractors.
- Union delegates to receive 5 paid days a year for training.
- Ex gratia payment of \$7500 paid when an employee dies for any reason.

If all that doesn't phase you try this piece of shocking truth extracted from the union agreement which you can read for yourself on line at *careers dot energex*.

Sick leave will be cumulative but ENERGEX will not be bound to make payment for more than 52 weeks absence from work through illness in any one year. Oh really, not more than 52 weeks a year and that folks is just one of the reasons your electricity is so expensive.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley