

## May 2015

### Watt Winter Woes

**Ouch!**

I have just received my quarterly electricity bill and it is the highest I have ever had, but my concern is that my next bill will be even higher. Winter is the time of year we use more electricity to keep warm, to dry our clothes and to heat our water. But the more electricity we use, the more money we pay when the electricity bill arrives.

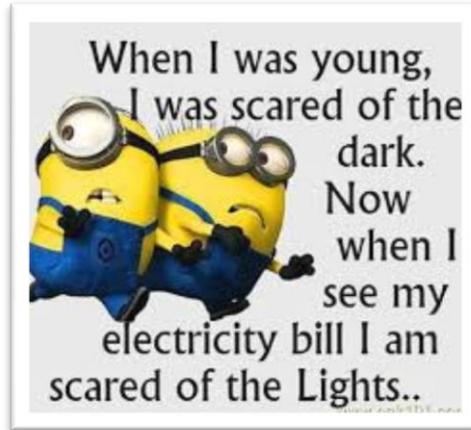
This can be a frightening thought – especially if we simply don't have that money. Below are some tips from others who have struggled to pay these bills in the past.

**Use less heat.**

Any appliance that uses heat, eats through power like a teenage boy with Weet-bix. Use a clothes airer rather than a dryer. Turn your heater to a lower setting and save. Using the lowest setting rather than the highest could save you as much as \$160 on your power bill (hmm – you could buy a nice jumper with that much money).



"By tonight we'll finally be in the black. We don't have enough to pay the electric bill."



**Turn it off.**

Whether it's lights or appliances, it uses less electricity if it is turned off. Appliances like televisions and stereos still use power in standby mode so turn them off at the wall to minimise power use.

**Make fortnightly payments.**

Many people have found it beneficial to make a regular fortnightly payment to their power provider through Centrepay. This can come straight out of their Centrelink Payment before it goes into their bank account. If you expect your quarterly bill to be around \$400, you should be making a fortnightly payment of no less than \$45. This will mean that your bill when it arrives will be much less. You can do the same thing yourself by setting aside an amount each fortnight ready for the bill – BUT – it takes an iron will (and no unexpected bills) for that to succeed.

