

Revenue (Cost of Living Relief Locked-in Law) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026

Explanatory Notes

Short title

The short title of the Bill is the *Revenue (Cost of Living Relief Locked-in Law) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026* (the Bill).

Policy objectives and the reasons for them

The Bill amends legislation administered by the Commissioner of State Revenue (Commissioner) to implement measures announced in the 2026-27 State Budget and gives effect to the government's commitments to provide ongoing cost of living relief Queenslanders can rely on.

The *Duties Act 2001* (Duties Act) is amended to target eligibility for the transfer duty home concessions to Australian citizens, permanent residents and specified foreign retirees, from 1 August 2026.

The *First Home Owner Grant and Other Home Owner Grants Act 2000* (FHOG Act) is amended to continue the increased amount of the First Home Owner Grant (FHOG) from \$15,000 to \$30,000, from 1 July 2026.

The *Payroll Tax Act 1971* (Payroll Tax Act) is amended to extend the 50 per cent payroll tax rebate for wages paid or payable to apprentices and trainees for a further year, until 30 June 2027.

The Bill also amends the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994* (TOPTA) to enshrine 50 cent fares in legislation to ensure ongoing cost of living support for Queenslanders. Locking in 50 cent fares through the TOPTA will provide certainty to Queenslanders, while providing a genuine incentive to leave the car at home. The commitment made prior to the 2024 election to make 50 cent fares permanent was confirmed and funded on an ongoing basis in February 2025.

Since then, more than 286 million trips have been taken representing a 23.4 per cent increase in patronage compared to the same period prior to 50 cent fares. This has delivered savings to Queenslanders of more than \$600 million. By now enshrining these provisions into the TOPTA, Queenslanders will be provided certainty about their daily transport costs and will result in genuine long term cost of living relief.

These measures build on the government's commitments to provide full transfer duty relief for first home buyers buying or building a new home and to provide a payroll tax exemption for payments made to general practitioners, thereby easing cost of living pressures for Queenslanders through the abolition of these two taxes.

Without the amendments proposed in this Bill, modification or removal of the government's cost of living commitments could occur without adequate public or parliamentary scrutiny.

By locking this cost of living relief in law, the government is delivering relief Queenslanders can rely on.

Achievement of policy objectives

Duties Act – Target eligibility for the transfer duty home concessions to Australian citizens, permanent residents and specified foreign retirees

Under the Duties Act, transfer duty is imposed on dutiable transactions involving land in Queensland. Duty is generally charged on the greater of the consideration paid for, or the unencumbered value of, the land.

The Duties Act provides home concessions which result in concessional rates of transfer duty applying for certain dutiable transactions that involve a buyer purchasing a home, first home or vacant land on which to build their first home.

Currently, temporary residents are eligible for the home, first home (including for new and existing homes) or first home vacant land concessions (collectively, the home concessions), subject to meeting the relevant conditions.

The Duties Act will be amended to require a buyer to be an Australian citizen, permanent resident or specified foreign retiree to be eligible for the home concessions. The changes will apply to eligible dutiable transactions entered into from 1 August 2026 (inclusive).

Consistent with the current transfer duty framework, transfer duty home concession eligibility will continue to be assessed separately for each party to a transaction and concessions applied in proportion to their interest in the property. Where, for example, an Australian citizen, permanent resident or specified foreign retiree purchases a home, first home or vacant land with a temporary resident from 1 August 2026, the Australian citizen, permanent resident or specified foreign retiree will continue to be eligible for concessional transfer duty rates in respect of their interest in the property (subject to meeting the relevant conditions) and standard rates of transfer duty will apply in respect of the temporary resident's interest in the property.

FHOG Act – Continue the increased FHOG amount

The FHOG Act provides for payment of the FHOG for first home buyers who have entered into an eligible transaction which has been completed and who satisfy certain eligibility criteria. An eligible transaction is a contract to purchase or build a new home, or the building of a new home by an owner builder.

Currently, the FHOG Act provides for a temporary increase in the amount of the FHOG from \$15,000 to \$30,000, which applies to eligible transactions entered into between 20 November 2023 and 30 June 2026 (both dates inclusive).

The FHOG Act will be amended to continue the increased amount of the FHOG of \$30,000 from 1 July 2026.

Payroll Tax Act – Extension of payroll tax rebate for apprentice and trainee wages

Under the Payroll Tax Act, payroll tax is payable by employers on all taxable wages. However, certain wages are specifically exempt. Relevantly, wages paid to apprentices or trainees during the period of their apprenticeship or traineeship are exempt where specified conditions are met.

In addition to the exemption for wages paid to apprentices and trainees, the Payroll Tax Act also provides a payroll tax rebate for wages paid or payable during an eligible year by an employer, or the designated group employer for a group, to a person who is an apprentice or trainee under the *Further Education and Training Act 2014* (the apprentice and trainee rebate). An ‘eligible year’ is a financial year ending 30 June 2010, 2011, 2012, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 or 2026. For an eligible year ending on or after 30 June 2017, a 50 per cent rebate applies to the wages of apprentices and trainees. For any other eligible year, the rebate is 25 per cent of the employer’s apprentice and trainee wages.

The Payroll Tax Act will be amended to extend availability of the 50 per cent apprentice and trainee rebate to wages paid or payable during the financial year ending 30 June 2027.

TOPTA - Enshrine 50 cent fares for particular public passenger transport services in legislation

In the first year since the government confirmed their permanent status, 50 cent fares on Translink buses, Queensland Rail city trains, Brisbane City Council ferries, Coochiemudlo and Southern Moreton Bay Island ferries, Gold Coast light rail and some other services in South East Queensland, as well as regional urban buses, have delivered millions in savings for commuters and significant increases to public transport patronage. The Bill would enshrine 50 cent fares in legislation to ensure ongoing cost of living support for Queenslanders.

TOPTA will be amended to place obligations on the chief executive (currently of the Department of Transport and Main Roads) to use their powers to ensure the fare for particular public passenger transport services remains no more than 50 cents.

Alternative ways of achieving policy objectives

The policy objectives of the Bill can only be achieved by legislative amendment.

Estimated cost for government implementation

Implementation costs relating to amendments to implement 2026-27 State Budget revenue measures are expected to be met from within existing budget allocations.

Permanent 50 cent fares have been implemented administratively through service contracts and integrated ticketing system arrangements. The proposal would enshrine 50 cent fares on relevant services in legislation. There would be no additional costs for stakeholders or government.

Consistency with fundamental legislative principles

The amendments to implement 2026-27 State Budget revenue measures are consistent with fundamental legislative principles (FLPs).

Permanent 50 cent fares

Section 4(2)(b) of the *Legislative Standards Act 1992* provides that legislation should have sufficient regard to the institution of Parliament. Section 4(4) of the *Legislative Standards Act 1992* states that whether a Bill has sufficient regard to the institution of Parliament depends on whether, for example, the Bill-

- allows the delegation of legislative power only in appropriate cases and to appropriate persons—subsection 4(4)(a); and
- sufficiently subjects the exercise of a delegated legislative power to the scrutiny of the Legislative Assembly—subsection 4(4)(b); and
- authorises the amendment of an Act only by another Act—subsection 4(4)(c).

While the term ‘permanent 50 cent service’ would be defined in the Act, the definition may be modified by regulation. Also, the definition is, in part, reliant on matters prescribed by regulation or declarations made by the chief executive. Such provisions of an Act that can be amended other than by another Act are sometimes known as a ‘Henry VIII provisions’.

Notably, the potential impact of altering the definition or its application to specific services is reduced because it does not infringe on individual rights or liberties. Additionally, the definition does not prevent the chief executive setting fares at no more than 50 cents for services beyond those covered by the definition.

Modification by regulation

The definition expressly allows additional services to be prescribed by regulation, enables the inclusion of other local government areas by regulation, and permits the disapplication of the definition to specific services prescribed by regulation.

The definition also refers to an ‘integrated mass transit service contract’ (IMTSC). Whether a service contract is an IMTSC depends, in part on the geographic area prescribed as the ‘integrated mass transit area’ (IMTA). The IMTA may be extended by prescribing additional areas or routes in regulation. Also, the extent of ferry services provided under an IMTSC may depend on declarations made by regulation under section 42A or TOPTA.

The definition also refers to the ‘Gold Coast light rail’ which is defined by regulation. Retaining the definition in regulation is appropriate to facilitate its timely amendment if needed.

Allowing the definition of ‘permanent 50 cent service’ to be modified by regulation and having it rely on terms which can be modified by regulation is considered appropriate as it would be impractical to capture the complexity of all the relevant circumstances in the Act. Further, the regulations are a disallowable instrument so would still be subject to Parliamentary scrutiny.

Modification by chief executive declaration

The definition of ‘permanent 50 cent service’ refers to an IMTC and to ‘service contract area or route’ via the definition of ‘regional centre service’. ‘Service contract area or route’ is defined in schedule 3 of TOPTA. The scope of both those terms depends, in part, on the exercise of administrative power - declarations by the chief executive made under section 42 of TOPTA.

There are safeguards on the use of the declaration power. Before a declaration can be made under section 42, the chief executive must give written notice of the proposed declaration to all operators providing a public passenger service of the kind and for the area or route to be specified in the proposed declaration. The chief executive must also allow at least 28 days for submissions and consider any submissions. Section 42 also requires that declared areas must be within those areas or routes declared by regulations made under section 36 of TOPTA as subject to market area restrictions. Before a regulation can be made under section 36, the Minister must be of the opinion that the criteria stated in subsection 36(2)(a)-(d) are met or can be met or substantially met. Regulations made under section 36 are a disallowable instrument so would be subject to Parliamentary scrutiny.

Making the definition of ‘permanent 50 cent service’ reliant on terms which are subject to the exercise of administrative power in this way is considered appropriate due to the complexity of the scheme and the granularity required to identify exactly which services are, and are not, included. It would otherwise be impractical to describe the relevant services.

Consultation

Community consultation was not undertaken in relation to the amendments in the Bill as they are being implemented as part of the 2026-27 State Budget. However, 50 cent fares have been popular in the community and the amendment would enshrine these in legislation.

Consistency with legislation of other jurisdictions

The amendments are specific to the State of Queensland and are not otherwise uniform with or complementary to legislation of the Commonwealth or another state or territory.

Notes on provisions

Part 1 Preliminary

Clause 1 provides that the Bill, when enacted, may be cited as the *Revenue (Cost of Living Relief Locked-in Law) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2026*.

Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the amendments made by the Bill. In particular, it provides that the amendments to the:

- *Duties Act 2001* commence on 1 August 2026; and
- *First Home Owner Grant and Other Home Owner Grants Act 2000* and *Payroll Tax Act 1971* commence on 1 July 2026.

Part 2 Amendment of the Duties Act 2001

Clause 3 provides that part 2 amends the *Duties Act 2001*.

Clause 4 inserts new section 90A into chapter 2, part 9, division 2, to provide who is a *specified resident*. A *specified resident* is defined as an individual who is an Australian citizen or a permanent resident (as defined in the dictionary in schedule 6) or a specified foreign retiree under section 246(2).

Clause 5 amends section 91 which provides the current transfer duty concessions for homes. Section 91(1) is amended to insert new section 91(1)(c), which requires each transferee, lessee or vested person, or each beneficiary (where the transferee, lessee or vested person is the trustee of a trust), to be a specified resident on the day the liability for transfer duty arises, for the concession under this section to be available for the dutiable transaction.

Clause 6 amends section 92 which provides the current transfer duty concessions for first homes other than new homes. Section 92(1) is amended to insert new section 92(1)(ba), which requires each transferee, lessee or vested person, or each beneficiary (where the transferee, lessee or vested person is the trustee of a trust), to be a specified resident on the day the liability for transfer duty arises, for the concession under this section to be available for the dutiable transaction.

Clause 7 amends section 92A which provides the current transfer duty concessions for first homes that are new homes. Section 92A(1) is amended to insert new section 92A(1)(ca), which requires each transferee, lessee or vested person, or each beneficiary (where the transferee, lessee or vested person is the trustee of a trust), to be a specified resident on the day the liability for transfer duty arises, for the concession under this section to be available for the dutiable transaction.

Clause 8 amends section 92B which provides the current transfer duty concessions for vacant land on which a first home will be constructed. Section 92B(1) is amended to insert new section 92B(1)(ba), which requires each transferee, lessee or vested person, or each beneficiary (where the transferee, lessee or vested person is the trustee of a trust), to be a specified resident on the day the liability for transfer duty arises, for the concession under this section to be available for the dutiable transaction.

Clause 9 amends section 93 which generally provides for the calculation of transfer duty on dutiable transactions involving multiple transferees, lessees or vested persons who are individuals, and relating to residential land that contains one or more residences that will be a home and/or first home other than new home of either all or some of the transferees, lessees or vested persons. Section 93 also applies to certain dutiable transactions where a person acquires a part interest in residential land that contains one or more residences, one of which will be their home or first home other than a new home. Section 93(4) is amended to provide that, for subsections (1)(c) and (2)(b), a residence may only be treated as the home or the first home of a relevant person if the relevant person is a specified resident on the day the liability for transfer duty arises.

This will mean that, where a transferee, lessee or vested person is not a specified resident on the day the liability for transfer duty arises, they will not be a relevant person (as defined in sections 93(1)(c)(i) and (ii), and (2)(b)) for the purposes of calculating transfer duty under this section for the dutiable transaction.

Clause 10 amends section 93A which generally provides for the calculation of transfer duty on dutiable transactions involving multiple transferees, lessees or vested persons who are individuals, and relating to residential land that contains one or more residences that will be a first home and new home of at least one transferee, lessee or vested person but not all. Section 93A also applies to certain dutiable transactions where a person acquires a part interest in residential land that contains one or more residences, one of which will be their first home and new home. Section 93A is amended to insert new section 93A(4A), which provides that, for subsection (1)(d), a residence may only be treated as the home of a relevant person if the relevant person is a specified resident on the day the liability for transfer duty arises. Section 93A(5) is also amended to provide that, for subsections (1)(d) and (2)(b), a residence may only be treated as the first home of a relevant person if the relevant person is a specified resident on the day the liability for transfer duty arises.

This will mean that, where a transferee, lessee or vested person is not a specified resident on the day the liability for transfer duty arises, they will not be a relevant person (as defined in section 93A(4)) for the purposes of calculating transfer duty under this section for the dutiable transaction.

Clause 11 amends section 93B which generally provides for the calculation of transfer duty on dutiable transactions involving multiple transferees, lessees or vested persons who are individuals, and relating to vacant land on which a residence will be constructed that will be a first home of at least one transferee, lessee or vested person but not all. Section 93B also applies to certain dutiable transactions where a person acquires a part interest in vacant land on which their first home will be constructed. Section 93B(3) is amended to provide that, for subsection (1)(c), a residence may only be treated as the first home of a relevant person if the relevant person is a specified resident on the day the liability for transfer duty arises.

This will mean that, where a transferee, lessee or vested person is not a specified resident on the day the liability for transfer duty arises, they will not be a relevant person (as defined in section 93B(1)(c)) for the purposes of calculating transfer duty under this section for the dutiable transaction.

Clause 12 amends section 94 which provides for mixed and multiple home concession claims in relation to dutiable transactions involving residential land where the transferee, lessee or vested person is the trustee of a trust and the beneficiaries are individuals under a legal disability. Section 94 clarifies how sections 93 and 93A apply to these relevant dutiable transactions involving trustees.

Section 94(3) is amended to replace the current references to sections 93(4) and 93A(5) with sections 93(4)(b)(ii) and 93A(5)(b), to ensure it continues to relate to the 18 years of age condition in sections 93 and 93A and not the specified resident condition, following the amendments to these sections explained above.

Clause 13 amends section 94A which provides for mixed and multiple home concession claims in relation to dutiable transactions involving vacant land on which a first home will be constructed, where the transferee, lessee or vested person is the trustee of a trust and the beneficiaries are individuals under a legal disability. Section 94A clarifies how section 93B applies to these relevant dutiable transactions involving trustees.

Section 94A(3) is amended to replace the current reference to section 93B(3) with section 93B(3)(b), to ensure it continues to relate to the 18 years of age condition in sections 93B and not the specified resident condition, following the amendments to this section explained above.

Clause 14 amends the dictionary in schedule 6 to insert a new definition for *specified resident* for chapter 2, part 9.

Part 3 Amendment of the First Home Owner Grant and Other Home Owner Grants Act 2000

Clause 15 provides that part 3 amends the *First Home Owner Grant and Other Home Owner Grants Act 2000*.

Clause 16 amends section 20, which provides the amount of a first home owner grant. From 1 July 2026, the amount of the grant for a *new home eligible transaction* will be the lesser of the consideration for the eligible transaction or \$30,000.

Clause 17 inserts new part 16 to provide a transitional provision for the *Revenue (Cost of Living Relief Locked-in Law) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2026*.

New section 91 provides that, for an eligible transaction with a commencement date for the transaction before 1 July 2026, the *First Home Owner Grant and Other Home Owner Grants Act 2000* continues to apply in relation to that eligible transaction as if this Act had not been amended by the *Revenue (Cost of Living Relief Locked-in Law) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2026*.

Part 4 Amendment of the Payroll Tax Act 1971

Clause 18 provides that part 4 amends the *Payroll Tax Act 1971*.

Clause 19 amends the definition of *rebate* in section 27A(3), which provides the formula for working out the rebate for wages paid or payable to apprentices and trainees during a periodic

return in an eligible year. The amendment extends availability of the 50 per cent rebate to the 2026-27 financial year.

Clause 20 amends the definition of *rebate* in section 35A(4). For an annual payroll tax amount, section 35A(4) provides the formula for working out the rebate for wages paid or payable to apprentices and trainees during an eligible year. The amendment extends availability of the 50 per cent rebate to the 2026-27 financial year.

Clause 21 amends the definition of *rebate* in section 43A(3), which provides the formula for working out the rebate for wages paid or payable to apprentices and trainees during a final return period in an eligible year. The amendment extends availability of the 50 per cent rebate to the 2026-27 financial year.

Clause 22 amends the definition of *eligible year* in the dictionary in the schedule to include the financial year ending 30 June 2027. This amendment, along with the other amendments to sections 27A(3), 35A(4) and 43A(3) explained above, extend availability of the 50 per cent rebate for wages paid or payable to apprentices and trainees to the 2026-27 financial year.

Part 5 Amendment of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994

Clause 23 states that part 5 amends the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994* (TOPTA).

Clause 24 inserts new part 4 in chapter 2 of TOPTA. The new Part (Permanent 50 cent fares) places obligations on the chief executive of the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) to use their powers to ensure fares for permanent 50 cent fare services are not more than 50 cents.

Subsection (1) defines a ‘permanent 50 cent fare service’ to include:

- (a) a road-based general route service provided under an integrated mass transit service contract;
- (b) a regional centre service provided under a service contract other than a prescribed school service contract;
- (c) a services provided on the south east Queensland rail network under a service contract;
- (d) a service provided on the Gold Coast light rail under a contract with the chief executive;
- (e) a ferry service provided under an integrated mass transit service contract;
- (f) a ferry service, other than a free ferry service, that is a scheduled passenger service operated on the Brisbane River on behalf of the Brisbane City Council and provided under a contract with the chief executive;
- (g) a service provided under a contract with the chief executive prescribed by regulation to be a permanent 50 cent fare service.

The definition of permanent 50 cent fare service is supported by existing and new definitions under TOPTA.

- ‘Service contract’ is already defined in section 38 of TOPTA as “a contract between the chief executive for the State and an operator under which the operator is required to provide a public passenger service for an area or route in a way that meets or exceeds performance levels stated in the contract”. Chapter 6 of TOPTA (Service contracts)

provides the framework for entering, and managing service contracts, including at section 38B, providing the chief executive the power to enter into service contracts for the State.

- ‘Road-based general route service’ and ‘integrated mass transit service contract’ are defined terms in schedule 3 of TOPTA.
- ‘Regional centre service’ is a new term and is defined in new subsection 10A(4) to mean a road-based general route service provided for a service contract area or route within or between particular local government areas stated in the provision.
- ‘Service contract area or route’ is a defined term in schedule 3 of TOPTA, and refers to areas or routes that have been declared under section 42 so a service contract is required to provide a particular public passenger service.
- ‘Prescribed school service contract’ is defined in schedule 3 of TOPTA. These services are not permanent 50 cent fare services because students eligible under the school transport assistance scheme do not pay any fare to travel to their nearest school. Beyond that, carrying fare paying passengers is generally a commercial arrangement between the passenger and the operator.
- ‘South east Queensland rail network’ is defined in new section 10A(4). This definition refers to the ‘Authority’ which is defined in schedule 3 of TOPTA by reference to section 6 of the *Queensland Rail Transit Authority Act 2013*. In effect it refers to Queensland Rail.
- ‘Ferry service’ is defined in schedule 3 of TOPTA.
- ‘Gold Coast light rail’ is defined by regulation (see clause 26 of the Bill which inserts new section 261 in the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation 2028* (TOPTR)).

Under subsection (1)(g) another service may be prescribed by regulation as a permanent 50 cent fare service and under subsection (2)(b), a service may be excluded from being a permanent 50 cent service by regulation.

‘Brisbane Airport Rail Link’ (defined in new section 10A(4)) services are expressly excluded under subsection (2) as they operate under specific arrangements.

Subsection (3) ensures that the provisions being inserted as new Part 4 do not prevent fares of no more than 50 cents being applied to services not included in the definition of permanent 50 cent fares.

Part 6 Amendment of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation 2018

Clause 25 provides that part 6 amends the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation 2018* (TOPTR).

Clause 26 inserts new section 261 in part 16, division 1 of TOPTR. The new section defines ‘Gold Coast light rail’ under the regulation making power in new section 10A(4) of TOPTA being inserted by the Bill. Gold Coast light rail is defined by reference to a map in schedule 7 of TOPTR and includes any other public transport infrastructure operated by, or under the control of, a light rail manager, or a light rail operator, for the light rail shown on that map. That is the same meaning clause 28 replaces in schedule 9 (Dictionary) of TOPTR.

Clause 27 amends schedule 7 to indicate that the authorising section for the schedule is new section 261(a) of TOPR.

Clause 28 replaces the existing definition of Gold Coast light rail in schedule 9 (Dictionary) of TOPTR with a new definition by reference to new section 261(a) of TOPTR.