



Speech by

**Dr DAVID WATSON**

**MEMBER FOR MOGGILL**

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Hansard 27 April 1999

### **GOVERNMENT ELECTION PROMISES**

**Dr WATSON** (Moggill—LP) (6.10 p.m.): I rise to second the motion. The Beattie Labor Government stands condemned for no fewer than four tax increases in just nine months. This Beattie Government has been so quick to raise taxes that in just nine months the only people in this State who have so far not been hit by a Beattie tax increase are vegetarians who do not drive and do not pay rates. The rest of us—and that includes every Queenslander who drives a car and every Queenslander who directly or indirectly pays rates and every Queenslander who likes a piece of bacon for breakfast or a sausage for lunch or an occasional steak for dinner—have been hit with tax increases, and those tax increases are beyond the CPI and beyond the pale. In fact, those tax increases underline just how two faced, backflipping and hypocritical this Government is.

Yet again, we have a classic example of Labor saying one thing in Opposition and doing the exact opposite in Government. Let us look at Labor's increase in the CTP—compulsory third-party insurance—or, should I say, Labor's two increases in the CTP. Within days of coming to power last year, Mr Hamill announced an increase of \$13 to \$22 per vehicle. Then just last Thursday, we had Labor's second increase of a further \$40. That means that, under Labor, CTP in this State has gone up by nearly \$60. That is a 25% increase. That is way above any cost of living increase, and that is pure hypocrisy on the part of Labor.

Let me just refresh the memories of honourable members. On coming to Government in late February 1996, the coalition Treasurer, Joan Sheldon, was forced to increase compulsory third-party insurance. She was forced to increase CTP because the Goss Government did not have the guts to do it—this is what this Government is saying right now. It kept delaying the decision and delaying the decision until the Mundingburra by-election was upon it and it was too late.

On coming to power, the coalition Government had the fiscal responsibility to make the hard decision straight away.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Dr WATSON:** The increase was \$66. That was \$66 in one hit. The increase in CTP was long overdue, and Labor knew it was long overdue. But that did not stop a very pious Peter Beattie telling Parliament on 16 May 1996 how he was going to head out that weekend and go around Queensland getting signatures on a petition opposing that CTP increase. In speaking to a disallowance motion on the Motor Accident Insurance Legislation Amendment Regulation No. 1 1996, Mr Beattie said—

"The Treasurer and her minority Government have imposed an unnecessary burden on Queensland motorists."

In justifying why the Goss Government had not introduced a rise in CTP, Mr Beattie said in that same debate—

"... the former Government was not convinced that the increase was justified. The former Government thought of the battling families. The former Government was not prepared to consider self-interest, which the Treasurer considers. The former Government thought of ordinary Queenslanders. The former Government thought of those battlers who would be paying that extra \$66."

I ask: where are Labor's thoughts now for the battlers after it has just hit the battlers and everyone else in this State with a 25% increase in CTP? Of course, in true Labor style, Labor has found someone else

to blame for the increase: ambulance chasing lawyers. In true Labor style, we can look forward to another costly review on the subject.

What about Mr Hamill's role in all of this? Is he in the same backflipping class as his Premier? Absolutely! In fact, Mr Hamill is pretty good at high jumping as well as backflipping. In the Courier-Mail of 2 April 1996, Mr Hamill said that, because of the CTP increase, thousands of Queensland families would struggle to keep their cars on the road. In that same disallowance debate on 16 May 1996, Mr Hamill, referring to the decision made by Joan Sheldon, said—

"What happened was that the insurers came in and said, 'Treasurer, we want an increase in compulsory third-party premiums.' What did the Treasurer say? She said, 'How high? How high do I jump?' "

The truth is that Mr Hamill has jumped twice, and the people of Queensland are entitled to jump up and down and complain, because when Mr Beattie was handed Government of this State by the Independent member for Nicklin, it was on the basis of a letter from Mr Beattie making certain undertakings. Sure, the member for Nicklin is no longer part of the equation, but decency and honesty would suggest that those undertakings should be kept, anyway. If they were good enough nine months ago, they should be good enough right now.

One of those undertakings was this: Labor can deliver its capital and current program without imposing any new taxes or increasing existing taxes and charges above current real levels. I repeat—current real levels.

Time expired.

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