



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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FEES AND CHARGES

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (12.24 a.m.): I wish to comment about how this state government is getting very good at raising fees but actually cutting services. I noted with interest that the member for Toowoomba South, the Hon. Mike Horan, mentioned truck booking fees for inspections as one of those examples of where services have fallen off. I want to raise the issue of obtaining real estate licences in a timely way.

There was a significant increase in the cost of real estate licences last year. The government certainly has not missed hitting this particular profession. I have constituents who have passed their course but who are finding that it is taking up to three months to get their licence through the Fair Trading Department. They have completed their sales training course yet they are unable to gain that licence in what would be a more appropriate time frame. This is after there has been a significant increase in the cost of that licensing regime.

It is time the state government cut the red tape involved in obtaining real estate licences. It is time a system was introduced. It is really about going back to a system which is more timely, because this blow-out is one that has just occurred, and this is just after there has been a huge hike in cost. It is typical of the Beattie Labor government. It takes more money and cuts services.

I also mention the issue of the state government not coming clean with constituents over the method of payment for vehicle registration. The introduction of the late payment fee does not give any leeway for late payment—not even a day. Yet the due date for payment of registration can fall on weekends, and the advice on the form regarding payment options is that payment can be made either before or on the due date. The government, by saying that payment can be made either before or on the due date, implies that even when the due date falls on the weekend payment can be made. This is only the case if people have a credit card, but the government does not provide that information on the renewal form.

I have been contacted by a lot of constituents who have posted the registration fee several days prior to the due date but, because the department had not received the payment on time, have incurred the late payment fee. I have raised this issue with the minister. I have asked for it to be rectified. The government does not want to rectify it, despite the fact that this is impacting on a lot of people, particularly those on lower incomes. They are not aware that they can pay by credit card on weekends, and that option is not well advertised. This has really hit people I know who have very little money in their pockets. It is a late payment fee that has been introduced with no grace as another example of a money raising exercise from a government that likes to slug the battlers and slug people who are just trying to go about their daily lives. Yet they are finding a decrease in service at the same time from state government agencies.