



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (4.33 pm): I rise to speak briefly to the Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2006. The bill offers a range of amendments across a number of acts. Amendments to the Community Ambulance Cover Act 2003 will provide for the exclusion by regulation for ancillary administrative processes from the requirement for commissioner approval of subcontracts for the performance of functions or parts of functions of an electricity retailer under the act. This and the other few consequential amendments are necessary following the decision that was made to sell the Allgas distribution network. The bill will also amend the Fuel Subsidy Act 1997 to expand the definition of fuel and extend the Queensland fuel subsidy to diesel used for on-road travel by certain equipment type vehicles. These changes are not contentious and have bipartisan support.

I want to turn now to the more interesting amendments this bill seeks to make in relation to some state duties. The bill will amend the Duties Act 2001 and will give effect to the abolition of hire duty and duty on transfers of certain other transactions relating to marketable securities from 1 January 2007. Amendments will also extend to the first home transfer duty concession to certain circumstances and modify the mortgage duty provisions to reflect the abolition of the mortgage duty in Tasmania. But the mortgage duty will continue to be charged in Queensland until 2008. The Beattie government said back in 1999 that it would consider abolishing the hire and mortgage duties from July 2006 as part of the original GST agreement. It cannot be disputed by those opposite that continuing to charge mortgage duties up until 2008 goes against the spirit of the original agreement. In recalling the agreement, July 2006 was the proposed date. The abolition of hire duty that this bill introduces will commence in January 2007, six months after the proposed date. Even if we can accept this delay, Queenslanders should not be expected to accept the abolition of mortgage duties some years after the agreement intended.

The Queensland government has been happy to beat its chest about the strength of the economy without giving due respect to the fact that GST revenue has had much to do with this strength. This morning we had the Deputy Premier proclaiming achievements 'on the back of a flourishing economy'. It is unfair that in good economic times—times for which we should thank the strong federal coalition government's financial management—the Beattie government is not following through with the spirit of the agreement and allowing Queenslanders to benefit as the Beattie government has from the revenue raised through the GST. The Beattie government will take, take, take and give just a little back. This certainly was not the intention of the agreement. Queenslanders have to be aware that state governments are being compensated by the federal government for repealing these duties. Taking, taking, taking! The Queensland coalition as proposed by the Leader of the Liberal Party wants to give back to Queenslanders. The Queensland coalition wants to acknowledge the true spirit the GST agreement had.

I understand why the government would say only that it would consider and not go as far as to commit to abolishing the duties back in 1999. Those opposite were right in wanting to see just how much the GST was going to raise. But the GST has proven a wonderful revenue raiser for the Beattie government, and now it is time to follow through. That is why the member for Moggill's amendments to repeal state government mortgage duty and non-real estate conveyance duties from 1 January 2007 should be accepted. There is no excuse not to accept the amendments proposed by the coalition, as

the amendments embrace the spirit of the agreement. Delaying the benefits of the agreement is certainly against the spirit of the agreement. The Beattie government needs to stop taking and start giving something back to the Queenslanders it is here to serve.