



Speech by

Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Wednesday, 18 August 2010

TRANSPORT LEGISLATION (FEES) AMENDMENT REGULATION (NO. 1)

Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (8.23 pm): I, too, am pleased to contribute to the debate this evening on the disallowance motion moved by the shadow minister. I am pleased to contribute to this debate because the regulation we are seeking to disallow cuts to the chase when it comes to Labor's economic mismanagement and it clearly portrays the alternatives that will face Queenslanders when they next decide who will govern this great state. Let us start with Labor's economic mismanagement. This regulation will pass on another CPI increase to licence and vehicle registration fees. On its own this may appear insignificant, but on the back of last year's 17 per cent to 22 per cent increase it is yet another slap in the face for Queensland's struggling families.

Last year the LNP stood in this House and denounced that outrageous fee increase for what it was—a desperate money grab by a desperately broke government. A quick look at the RACQ's analysis shows this. Let us take a four-cylinder car that in 2008-09 cost \$263 to register. In 2009-10 that amount jumped to \$308.25, an increase of 17 per cent. If we take a six- or eight-cylinder car, the increase is even greater. If we compare that to other Australian states, Queenslanders get a greater sense of the magnitude of this slap in the face. In New South Wales—the most expensive of the other states—it costs \$245.20 to register a small car. In Victoria—the cheapest—it costs \$178. What do we pay in Queensland? \$308.25. The average across all other states is \$191.29. What conclusions did the RACQ arrive at? It states—

The Queensland Government portrays itself as low taxing compared with other jurisdictions. However, the data on registration costs presented in this FactSheet make it clear that vehicle owners in Queensland face the highest government-imposed fixed costs in Australia.

Queensland motorists have enjoyed the benefits of an 8.354 cents/litre fuel subsidy that is not available in other states. To some extent, this has balanced the very high registration costs in Queensland.

Should the registration costs increase further, and the fuel subsidy be removed, Queenslanders will face the highest vehicle ownership and operating costs in the country.

None of the proposed increase in revenue to the Queensland Government is dedicated to fund transport infrastructure or services. It will go to consolidated revenue, where it will replace other shortfalls in revenue due to the economic downturn, or other increases in government expenditure.

And there we have it. The Bligh Labor government did remove the fuel subsidy. This Bligh Labor government continues to funnel more than a billion dollars in revenue raised through registrations into consolidated revenue, not into transport infrastructure, and this Bligh Labor government is yet again increasing registration fees. It finishes off a trio of blows that see Queensland motorists facing the highest vehicle ownership and operating costs in the country.

If that was the only cost-of-living increase confronting Queensland's struggling families then perhaps it could be justified, but it is not. The vehicle operating cost increases have flow-on impacts on groceries and daily services, as businesses pass on their own increased expenses.

And then there are electricity increases and water increases. Just on that alone, constituents in Glass House—constituents who have used tank or bore water for the past 10 years—now pay \$223 a quarter for that privilege. Where will it end? Kevin O'Keefe and the federal Labor Party fought an election on cost-of-living increases and his commitment to reduce the burden on Australian working families. But after what Queensland has seen since, one must ask: was that the fake Labor Party? Has the real Labor Party stepped forward at both the federal and the state level over the ensuing three years? Queenslanders know that the answer is a resounding yes—the real Labor Party crippled by economic mismanagement, the real Labor Party stumbling from one failed initiative to another, the real Labor Party forced to raise taxes and fees to offset its mountainous debt repayments, the real Labor Party that does not care about cost-of-living increases after all.

That brings me to the alternative being offered to Queenslanders. When it comes to reining in cost-of-living increases, only the LNP has a plan. The LNP, upon restoring the state's AAA credit rating, has committed to reinstating the fuel subsidy. Only the LNP has committed to freezing registration costs for cars, boats and light trucks during its first term in government. Whether it is the federal election this Saturday or the state election due before March 2012, Queensland's struggling families have a decision to make: do they vote for the real Labor Party, which will do and say anything to win their vote, which will continue to tax and levy them to make up for its economic mismanagement, which will force cost-of-living increase after cost-of-living increase upon them; or will they vote for an LNP that has a proven record of economic management and a commitment to put a freeze on registration cost increases like the ones contained in this regulation?