



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

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Hansard Tuesday, 8 June 2010

BLIGH LABOR GOVERNMENT

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (12.12 pm): Last election Premier Bligh and Labor promised that Queenslanders could count on them. Twelve months later, Queenslanders are counting—and they are finding less money in their pockets but there is also another hand in there with sticky fingers clawing at their hard-earned dollars, and it belongs to the Premier of Queensland, Anna Bligh. The only things that Queenslanders can count on from Labor are hikes in registration, hikes in petrol prices with the loss of the fuel tax rebate, hikes in electricity, hikes in tolls, hikes in public transport fares, hikes in water bills and hikes in general charges. And why? Because this Labor team has mismanaged the boom years and now is raiding the household savings of every mum and dad, every pensioner or self-funded retired Queensland, small business owner or student. Altogether households are being whacked with a government fuel price rise of about \$1,200 extra this year, according to estimates. The Premier and her Labor team shrug their shoulders and tell people, 'Tough luck!' But I ask people in the street and I ask people in the community, and they say that they do not think they are getting value for money with these huge price hikes. They respond with a resounding anger that this is unfounded and that they should not be hit with these costs because they are not seeing value for money.

Under Labor, Queensland is now the most expensive state in Australia to own and operate a car. That is a broken promise of Labor, and Queenslanders deserve better. The average household will be paying about \$220 more this year in running costs. With the removal of the petrol tax rebate, Queensland's fuel tax-free status is lost—another broken promise. This means that Queensland now has some of the most expensive petrol in Australia and registration fees. I table a list of a range of these price hikes under Labor.

Tabled paper: Document listing registration, toll, go card, and driver's licence costs [\[2333\]](#).

Registration fees have seen the cost of running a vehicle increase by up to 24 per cent. Tolls have gone up by more than 30 per cent as at July 2010. In terms of the go card for public transport, there have also been huge increases, with some tickets going up by more than 40 per cent. Depending on how one configured their travel before, there are people who as regular commuters are finding that they are paying up to \$1,000 more because of the loss of some of the capped fares they previously had. These are huge increases, and they are hurting people. Driver's licences is the next one to come. This Labor government promised the so-called smart card, but guess what? It has a pretty smart price tag attached to it. It is going to more than double the cost of a Queensland driver's licence, and all for what? A so-called smart chip which does what? Well, not much actually, because when we ask members of the government what it does they say, 'We're future proofing.' They cannot tell us! This is a bungled project—one that was started for a promise of more and all we are getting is more costs and not more service. This project started out at less than \$20 million and now has blown out to more than \$100 million, and this is why Queenslanders are being asked to pay more.

With regard to the driver's licence hike, I have initiated an e-petition on the parliamentary website, and I have hard copies of it as well. I urge people to go to the parliamentary website—www.parliament.qld.gov.au—to add their voice on this issue. Did the transport minister, Rachel Nolan, or main roads minister, Craig Wallace, stand up to their cabinet colleagues and say, 'Hang on a moment.

These costs are hurting people. They're unsustainable? No! They ignored the pleas of the people and they ignored the waste and mismanagement which has occurred under their watch, such as the \$800 million cost blow-out on the Ipswich Motorway, which is equivalent to 4,000 kilometres of rural and regional roadway upgrades. As I have mentioned, there is also the blow-out of the so-called smart licence, and they rubber-stamped their approval for the price hikes the same way they rubber-stamped the Premier's decision to sell out Queensland Rail, the ports and motorways—income-earning assets which have traditionally offset the costs borne by taxpayers.

It is time that Labor and its mates got their sticky fingers out of the pockets of Queensland motorists. The answer is about better management, not wasting the valuable money of Queensland taxpayers. Our plan is to restore Queensland's future and get the sticky fingers of this Labor government out of people's pockets. It is time to appreciate the cost of each hard-earned dollar of Queenslanders rather than treating them like milch cows to bleed when you cannot manage the budget. It is time to value professional public servants with a particular focus on rebuilding in-house engineering capacity in Transport and Main Roads so these ridiculous cost blow-outs and politicised decisions—

(Time expired)