



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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DRIVERS' LICENCES

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (12.09 pm): Labor's answer to a problem is to throw money at it, to not demand value for money and then to make the people pay for the waste. The transport minister, Rachel Nolan, has failed to prove her claim that a doubling in the cost of a Queensland driver's licence is value for money. I challenge Minister Nolan to release all the documents about the cost escalation of this bungled project and to be accountable to the parliament and to the people—the people whom the minister is telling to wear this outrageous cost hike. The minister's claim that the cost hikes are value for money is like telling Queenslanders to eat cake when many of them are struggling to survive. Motorists are saying a resounding no to the hikes, with 75,000 people signing an e-petition to protest the Bligh Labor government's plan to more than double the cost of a licence over the next five years.

Queensland motorists are the most heavily burdened in Australia since the hikes in registration fees and tolls as well as the petrol tax, and this Labor government is not listening. If Transport Minister Nolan wants to continue the pretence that the huge cost blow-outs are value for money, I say: let us see the proof. I remind the minister that the Auditor-General in his report to parliament No. 8 warned the following—

... projects can only be considered successful if they deliver intended benefits at an acceptable cost. Therefore, within government, there needs to be a focus on benefits and the active monitoring and reporting of progress towards realising those benefits.

I table that excerpt.

Tabled paper: Extract from Auditor-General's report to parliament No. 8 for 2010: Results of audits at 31 May 2010—Financial and compliance audits, pages 17-20 [[2946](#)].

Where is the proof? I have sought information about the reasons for the cost blow-outs under the right-to-information laws and I have been blocked. I am appealing the latest decision. This government is desperate to hide the trail of paper about its financial mismanagement and thumbs its nose at the Auditor-General's recommendations. But Labor Minister Nolan still has the audacity to tell Queensland motorists, who bear a cost burden greater than the people in any other Australian state, that this latest cost hike is good value.

Let me address first this huge cost blow-out on the project. I table an outline of the escalation in costs, from about \$6 million in 2002-03 to an estimated \$20 million when the project was restarted in 2006-07, and then a whopping cost escalation in the past few years which has brought the project up to \$112 million.

Tabled paper: Table titled 'New Queensland Drivers Licence (NQDL)—Capital Statements Data' [[2947](#)].

Last year alone the estimated total cost for the new Queensland driver's licence project blew out by \$30 million. The result of this mismanagement is that motorists are being gouged. They are milch cows. The cost of a single year's licence will rise from \$29.35 to \$68.50 in 2014-15. For a learner driver the cost rises from \$72.60 to \$148.35, and the cost for a five-year licence rises from \$75.55 to \$152.50. This increase is a more than doubling of the cost of a licence in only a few years. I table a list of those costs.

Tabled paper: Table detailing various Queensland driver's licence fees as at 1 July 2010 [[2948](#)].

Even with the huge cost blow-out on the original driver's licence project, the government is still creaming the public. It is draining the money from motorists' purses. There are just over three million licensed drivers in Queensland. At \$152.50 for a five-year licence, the government will reap \$477 million over the life of that five-year licence. This is well and truly in excess of the original capital investment of \$112 million. We have to ask: where is the money going? It is time this minister and this government were accountable. They are ripping the money out of the pockets of motorists. They are trying to say that it is value for money but they will not come clean with the facts.

Let us look at the claim that the technology is worthwhile. I think the only fraud that is being perpetrated is the fraud of this government. The minister claims that the new card, which includes a chip—and they cannot explain how it will be used—will stop fraud. It appears that the only fraud here is the government. This project is overdesigned for what it will deliver and it is overpriced. The chip was originally supposed to carry the address on the inside. The boffins realised a bit late that the licence could not be read interstate and that there were other problems with other entities not being able to read the address on the inside. So they put the address back on the outside. I asked at the briefing what the chip would do and I was told that it was future proofing, but for what future it could not be explained. The situation goes from the bizarre to the ridiculous, because people will be able to buy the new five-year high-tech card and if they change their address they will still end up with an address sticker on the back of that high-tech card.

(Time expired)