




Speech by

Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard Wednesday, 3 August 2011

TRANSPORT LEGISLATION (FEES) AMENDMENT REGULATION (NO. 1) 2011

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs) (9.05 pm): Can I say at the outset that we will be opposing this disallowance motion moved by the opposition. Tonight, we have found clear evidence that the opposition members have not even read the regulation that they have moved to disallow. We saw the member for Gympie stand up to try to rule the member for Ipswich West out of order for talking about pilotage fees, which is part of the regulation that is being debated here tonight. This is a lazy opposition—an opposition that does not do its homework, an opposition that just talks in here about a few things without getting the facts and the substance behind them.

The members opposite came in here and said that the government does not understand cost-of-living pressures. Yes, we do. I represent an electorate called Inala. Let me tell you about cost-of-living pressures. When I grew up in Inala we did not even have a bus service.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Minister, direct your comments through the chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The Liberal council refused to give the struggling families of Inala a bus service. Let us talk about education for a moment.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: This is all relevant. The members opposite say that we do not understand. We clearly understand.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members on my left, the minister is simply commenting.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I sat here and listened to each and every one of you speak, so you can just listen to me now.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Minister, please direct your comments through the chair and I am sure that will take some of the heat out of this issue.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The late Kev Hooper was the member for Archerfield and he told me the story that the National Party government used to have maps of the schools in Queensland. Yes, members might think that is a good idea. The maps were coloured red and green—red for Labor and green for the National Party. The red signalled that no money was to be spent in those electorates. So for 32 years hardly any money was spent on education in the Inala electorate. That is a fact. So the members opposite should not come in here with their airs and graces and tell me that they understand cost-of-living pressures, because we do.

Mr Seeney: This is class warfare, comrades.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will take that challenge any day of the week. The member for Gladstone was spot on tonight when she said that the majority of the fees in this disallowance motion have gone up only in line with the CPI. That is the fact. The members opposite have come in here tonight and tried to grandstand and tried to make out that there are more fee increases in here than there actually are. The member for Gladstone was absolutely correct.

Any government trying to frame any budget must face up to the challenges and make important decisions. That is why in this year's budget we removed the ambulance levy from people's electricity bills. We also introduced from the end of last year savings on compulsory third-party insurance. Queenslanders know that, like their own budgets, the books ultimately have to be balanced. If you reduce income in one area you need to cut spending in another. It is a pretty simple equation and we have to make choices. That is exactly what we do.

Mr Wilson: It's not simple enough for the other side.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. We have to stand up and say to Queenslanders, 'We know there are cost-of-living expenses. We know there are pressures.' That is why we offer a range of assistance, a suite of programs to help Queenslanders where we can.

That is why we subsidise the cost of some public transport modes by around 70 per cent, giving people a choice about whether to drive or whether to use public transport. That is why we want heavy vehicles to pay higher registration fees. Mum and dad drivers should not have to subsidise the cost of repairing the damage big trucks cause to our roads and bridges. Drivers in Cairns, Caloundra and Cardwell should not have to pay more to repair roads so Kmart, Coles and Woolworths can pay less.

I note with interest that the wording of this motion moved by the honourable member means it would disallow every provision of the regulation. I just remind him again that that is the regulation that he did not read. The member could have moved to disallow particular provisions, but instead he chose to throw it out in its entirety. This means that, as well as reducing road spending, reducing funds available for school crossing supervisors and road safety, the motion would mean everyday Queenslanders would pay more to subsidise multibillion-dollar shipping companies.

The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee considered the Transport Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation and included information in *Alert Digest* No. 7 of 2011. Under the new arrangements in place in the House the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has now been disbanded, but I would like to respond briefly to some of the issues it raised. The committee asked for further information and I am happy to provide it to the House. In relation to the new Queensland driver's licence, the previous driver's licence had been in place for almost a quarter of a century and has become increasingly susceptible to fraud using even relatively unsophisticated technology. There are serious ramifications for personal and financial security when licences can be reproduced fraudulently or stolen to enable a false identity to be assumed. Identity fraud and theft is escalating across the nation and Queenslanders have not been immune to its personal and financial costs. As of 2007, Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show more than 800,000 Australians have lost a combined \$977 million through personal fraud. This includes 87,000 victims of personal identity fraud in Queensland alone. That is why this government has introduced the safest and most secure licence in the country.

This government takes the issue of safety and security very seriously. Queenslanders will benefit because they can be confident in the integrity of Queensland's licensing system as it will be extremely difficult for people to fraudulently obtain, duplicate or tamper with the licence. We are using new technology to move an outdated system into the next decade. Already more than 100,000 Queenslanders have the most secure driver's licence system in Australia, incorporating state-of-the-art facial recognition to help fight against identity theft and fraud. In relation to the fees of these licences, as the member for Gladstone also said, and we discussed this issue, in five years time it is projected that the licence will cost about the same as what drivers in New South Wales, South Australia and the ACT pay now. This is despite the fact that other states only use outdated card technology which is inferior to our technology. Not acting to update our licence system would cost Queenslanders just as much, if not more, now and in the future.

Another area I wanted to discuss briefly is in relation to concessions. If registration fees did not go up by CPI, and the Minister for Main Roads would know this, the state would forego around \$40 million which would be otherwise going into the road network. So it is not just about cost increases. The government continues to limit the cost of living as much as possible, especially to our most vulnerable community members. In 2010-11 the government will provide an estimated \$1.32 billion in concessions to pensioner and Seniors Card holders, school transport and the taxi subsidy scheme to name a few. Of this amount, the Department of Transport and Main Roads will provide approximately \$360 million in concessions with an estimated \$92 million relating specifically to registration related concessions.

I note that the member for Lockyer raised some concerns in relation to what was happening following the floods. I want to relay to the House that during the natural disaster period the government

developed a disaster assistance package to support both Queensland flood and cyclone victims with the following: exemption from the surcharge fees for light and heavy vehicles; exemption from the fees for late payment of registration renewal; and also exemption for replacement of standard numberplates if lost during the flood. This is about the government listening and responding to people in their time of need, so do not tell us we do not know what is going on. We certainly do. We actually have policies that are backed up and are well thought out and we will continue to provide concessions. Those opposite would cut concessions if they were on this side of the House. In conclusion, the government will not be supporting this motion.