



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Tuesday, 15 November 2011

MOTION: COST OF LIVING

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (6.06 pm): What a load of rot! It was the Labor Party that put the battler into bat by ripping out the last dollar from the poor people's pockets. Never have so many Queenslanders been hungry and homeless as we see now. Never have we seen so many people looking for food at Foodbank and other services in our community, sleeping under bridges, sleeping rough, sleeping in cars and desperately trying to keep afloat.

This Labor government is 20 years too long in this place. It is out of touch and it is arrogant. This House should condemn the Bligh Labor government for the constant increases in the cost of living for Queensland families and businesses. Labor's bungles have hurt the battler and, as we have seen from recent reports through QCOSS, a record number of people have slipped below the poverty level. Worsening unemployment among women and our youth has delivered a shocking result, with more than 480,000 Queenslanders living in poverty. Queenslanders are going without meals, they are unable to pay their bills on time, they are struggling to afford second-hand clothing.

That is a reality of Labor's nonstop attack on household budgets, but it does not care. It does not say sorry. It does not have any answers for the mess that it has created, other than to ignore it and turn a blind eye. The Queensland Council of Social Service's annual poverty statement released recently shows that in the past five years household essentials, including power, water, petrol, rego, bus and rail fares have risen faster than CPI. Who is to blame for that? The Labor Party! Nearly half a million Queenslanders are living in poverty and that is the shameful result of the Bligh government's incessant cost-of-living increases.

The Bligh government's gross mismanagement of our state has meant that Queenslanders are being hit by higher costs at every turn. Our struggling economy is falling behind. Jobs are the financial benchmark in many of our regions, and those opposite do not want to talk about that. We see in many areas that people are hurting and they have never faced what they are facing today. Seniors and other Queenslanders on fixed incomes have been hit particularly hard by Labor's increases in household expenses. Despite Premier Bligh's promise that nobody would be worse off under the Labor government's electricity changes, power bills have spiralled up by over 60 per cent and average home bills are going to rise a further \$118 this year. Queensland is now the most expensive state in which to own and operate a car. Once again, who is to blame for this? The Labor Party! Anna Bligh broke her promise not to introduce a new—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will refer to the Premier by her correct title.

Ms SIMPSON: The Premier, Anna Bligh, broke her promise not to introduce a new 9.2c per litre fuel tax immediately following the last election, resulting in Queenslanders paying an extra \$2.4 billion over four years when they fill their petrol tanks. Who is to blame for this? The Labor Party! Registration for the family car is going up another three per cent, or \$23, this year, and that is on top of the 24 per cent increase over the last three years. The cost of drivers' licences is also set to double, from \$73.70 to \$152.50 for a five-year licence. Who is to blame for this? The Labor Party! It is no wonder that QCOSS reported a massive jump in the need for community assistance, revealing that community based support had increased by

seven per cent in just one year. There was also a six per cent increase in the number of people who were turned away from assistance and a 73 per cent increase in demand for financial services.

Premier Anna Bligh and Labor do not deserve another go—not this time. Only the LNP will get the four-pillar economy back on track and control government waste to assist Queenslanders' cost of living. We have already announced our plan to save average Queensland families around \$250 to \$330 a year through reforms to electricity and water pricing, freezing the family car rego for a term and scrapping Labor's \$7,000 stamp duty slug on the family home. This government—this tired, lazy and toxic Labor government—has been here too long, it has lost touch and it is arrogant. The people who have paid the price for its bungling are the people in Queensland. Labor's bungles have hurt the battler in Queensland. It does not deserve another go. It is time for a change. It is time to give Queenslanders a fair go and an opportunity to have hope in this nation.

(Time expired)