



Speech by  
**Grace Grace**

**MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL**

Hansard Wednesday, 3 August 2011

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

**Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (8.05 pm): I rise also to not support this disallowance motion. We have to bring some common sense back into this House after seeing the mass hysteria of those opposite. Those in this House with common sense have to realise that all departments must from time to time raise fees and charges. But that does not mean that we do not recognise that some people are under pressure. The government in 2010-11 will provide over \$1.3 billion in concessions to pension, concession and seniors card holders because we recognise that there are those members in the community who are struggling to make ends meet.

When we look at the increases that this disallowance motion is trying to stop, we see that, without them, the funding needed for the department to deliver services that keep people in jobs, that keep Queensland growing, will not be there. Consequently, mums and dads might find themselves unemployed. I am very proud to stand here and say that our funding on infrastructure and capital investment is second to none in this country. We are delivering many jobs for those in the community who are struggling. When we look at the fees that are increased in relation to this disallowance we see that already we spend twice the amount that we receive in registration fees on roads. I think that is a very important point to make. Passing this disallowance motion would mean less money for roadworks, less money for safety and less money, of course, for some of those workers.

In particular, I want to direct my comments to the taxi industry security levy. In late 2005 the Department of Transport and Main Roads assumed funding responsibility from the Brisbane City Council for six secure taxi ranks operating in Brisbane—largely in my electorate. As well as paying for marshals and guards at these ranks, which have proved to be phenomenally successful, the department made further improvements to safety through better lighting, improved signage, the installation of safety barriers and the extension of closed-circuit television. The ranks were introduced to provide safety and improve security for late-night revellers in key entertainment precincts such as Fortitude Valley. The rank has helped to reduce the number of violent incidents. Recently at a drink-safe precinct meeting we got a report back on the reduction in the number of violent incidents as well as the reduction in the waiting time for people to access those taxis. This was a very successful initiative. The number of secure ranks in Brisbane has now increased to 12, with a further 14 secure ranks now established in regional centres.

A funding agreement is in place in every area where a secure rank operates. In August 2007 legislation was introduced that enables the Department of Transport and Main Roads to collect a taxi industry security levy from owners of taxi service licences that are held where the taxi secure ranks operate. This levy has helped to fund the provision of this wonderful service, which I know that many people who use these ranks late at night have been most grateful for. The levy is increased annually and goes a long way to meeting the wages for the rank marshals and security guards that make up the majority of costs associated with the provision of the secure ranks. These wages vary depending on the region in which the services are supplied. Therefore, CPI increases to the taxi industry security levy help offset the

normal wage rises that occur within the security industry which, in turn, result in additional costs to the supply of secure ranks.

An inability to raise this levy via the CPI increase each year would result in increased costs to the department, it could see a decrease in the hours that we employ those people to do a wonderful job and, of course, it would limit the ability of the program to meet its objectives. Therefore, coming into this House and continually going on about the pressures in the cost of living and somehow implying that the government is doing nothing about it is simply misleading this House. I note that the member for Indooroopilly said that the LNP understands cost-of-living pressures. I can tell the House that they certainly do, because the unit owners in the inner city were not informed that they were going to increase their rates, yet I heard not one word from those opposite—

**Mr Rickuss:** Relevance.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Member for Lockyer, you have been warned. This is your last warning.

**Ms GRACE:** I did not hear one word when rates were increased by up to 400 per cent for people living in inner-city units. They look at me open mouthed, as if it is the first time they ever heard it. The other thing in relation to cost-of-living pressures is that the best thing you can give to mums and dads is a secure job. The best thing you can give them is a job where they are paid well and have entitlements. When Work Choices came in, giving the bosses the ability to sack you on the spot meaning that your livelihood was taken away, once again I did not hear any complaints from those opposite.

Let us think about the expenditure in Campbell Newman's failed projects, such as Clem7, which has failed, and CityCycle, which has not only failed but also delivered incredible advertising pollution that is destroying the beauty of the inner city. We were duped when it came to that advertising pollution on the footpaths. Let us be frank: this is nothing more than a political stunt by those opposite. This is nothing but grandstanding on a political forum to try to advocate policies that they do not have. This has nothing to do with any sympathy they have for the average, ordinary Queenslander. This is all about political grandstanding on the basis of hysteria. I find nothing more hypocritical than what they have had to say.