




Speech by

Hon. Campbell Newman

MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE

Hansard Thursday, 17 May 2012

TREASURY (COST OF LIVING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (4.09 pm): I rise to speak in support of the need for this bill to be dealt with as an urgent bill. I took great interest in the comments just made by the member for Mulgrave. If we were not a government that is intent on saving money, we should publish those colossally arrogant comments and send them to every Queensland household, particularly the struggling households in the member's own electorate. We should make it very clear that once again we see what the Labor Party actually stands for: indecision and procrastination. It is so good at taking things to committees.

I spent seven years at the Brisbane City Council. For the first four years I was forced to try to take Brisbane City forward with a huge burden in my saddlebags. It was called a Labor Party majority. I had a Labor-dominated city cabinet. Every Monday for about five hours now Lord Mayor Graham Quirk and I would listen to the nonsense of the Australian Labor Party councillors. Just in the past couple of days, but particularly today, I can see already from the comments made that it is in their DNA to procrastinate, to send things to committees and to never make decisions. On this issue there is an overwhelming need. I see it in their faces. They want to go to a committee, hold hands and sing *Kumbaya My Lord*, while across Queensland families are suffering due to their financial ineptitude and their poor and reckless financial management. We will not tolerate that.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: I think I have hit a raw nerve. The member for Mulgrave knows that he is on the end of the hook. He is struggling and jangling, trying to get off the hook. He knows he has committed a huge faux pas. We are trying to save money for families across Queensland, so why should we wait? What earthly reason could there be for waiting? What is so complex about this? For the benefit of the financial illiterates on the other side of the chamber, maybe we should again go through what this is all about. Fundamentally, this bill is about dealing with cost-of-living pressures.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: The person who is interjecting was part of the gang about which in recent times a few commentators have said, 'Gee, they should be in jail, particularly that Andrew Fraser guy.' That is what someone said to me; I am not saying it. A well-known media commentator said it to me behind closed doors. He felt that we had seen poor and reckless financial management.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: The Leader of the Opposition is interjecting, but she was a party to decisions that created a \$2.8 billion deficit this financial year and that saw motor vehicle registration go up by 30 per cent. The Leader of the Opposition, who was the transport minister, has the absolute temerity to come in here and try to slow down cost-of-living relief.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: What would Labor know about due process? Let us look at its due process. What was the member for Mulgrave doing when the arrangements for the Yeppoon Hospital came through?

Maybe he was not in the parliament at that time, but other people were around at that stage. The Yeppoon Hospital was dealt with in one afternoon. What about the local government arrangements, where they completely belted up and bashed up local government? Was that given to a committee for due process? No, not at all! What about the asset sales bill? How long did that spend before a committee? I see the beady eyes looking back at me. They are caught. I will say this about due process: when the Labor Party talks about due process, we go back to the actual spelling of the word 'hypocrisy'. Do honourable members know how to spell 'hypocrisy'? A-L-P! That is how you spell it. How dare they come in here this afternoon and talk about due process. They have no credibility whatsoever.

For the benefit of the financial illiterates opposite, let us look at what they are trying to hold up and what they are trying to stop for Queensland families. Do they want to keep family homes more expensive by having \$7,000 more in tax? Is that what they want? I am waiting for the interjections. Is it a good thing to slow down giving cost-of-living relief to those buying a family home? That is what this sort of unwanted intrusion into the orderly progress of the bill before the House this afternoon is all about. What about the payroll tax exemption? They are probably against that, because when I look across the chamber I am looking for the small business opposition spokesperson. Bzzz! I look around the chamber at my proud team and I see a few people who know about payroll tax, because they have paid it and they know how hard it is to make up staff payrolls each week.

Mr PITT: I rise to a point of order. There is a longstanding tradition that members do not talk about a member who is absent from the chamber. I am not sure what that reason may be. Therefore, those comments should be retracted.

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. There was no mention at all of assets or any particular member. It was a general comment.

Mr PITT: I rise to a point of order. This has nothing to do with assets; this has to do with the fact that there was a reference to the small business shadow minister not being in the chamber. The Premier said, 'Bzzz' to say that she was not in the chamber. That is what this is about.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! I have been listening carefully to the Premier's speech. I have not heard anything that, to my knowledge, has impeached on anyone else.

Mr NEWMAN: The bill seeks to freeze for one year tariff 11 electricity retail prices—that is, the family tariff. Does the member want higher electricity costs? Does he want families to pay higher electricity prices for longer? This bill is urgent because we want to give cost-of-living relief to families and businesses across Queensland. That is what we want to do.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: Again the Leader of the Opposition is interjecting and again I say that every Queenslander should know about this disgraceful performance this afternoon. We went to an election and said that we would do these things. This afternoon we are trying to do it quickly and efficiently. I know the Labor Party. If we had not brought this bill forward, we would have had the Leader of the Opposition piously asking, 'When are they going to act? They are breaking their commitments. They aren't acting quickly enough.' Over this entire three-year term we will see breath-taking hypocrisy from the ALP, week after week and month after month.

The final thing I will say is this: what is so bad about removing sustainability declarations? What is so bad about getting rid of them as soon as possible? Any real estate agent can tell us what people are doing on their sustainability declarations. If I tabled a blank piece of paper, we would see what people have been providing to vendors, because they have not been filling out the questions. It is an unnecessary piece of red tape or green tape, and it should go. In conclusion, this bill is urgent because these are commitments and they need to be delivered. Through this package we will provide cost-of-living relief and reduce some red tape. I cannot see why the Australian Labor Party does not get it. If this is the way it is going to act over the next three years, all I can say is, 'Thank you very much indeed, because that works for me.'