




Speech by

Hon. Glen Elmes

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

Hansard Tuesday, 19 June 2012

TREASURY (COST OF LIVING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (3.11 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 on behalf of the constituents of Noosa. The Newman LNP government faces stiff challenges on many fronts. All ministers look into the mirror each morning and remind themselves that they are now looking at the person who is responsible. I urge all Queenslanders to read the interim report of the Queensland Commission of Audit. The quickest glance will be a shock, as the report sets out the parlous condition of this state's finances. It is essential that the community understands the issues fully as it is a journey of recovery that we need to be taking together. While we on this side of the House are now the government and we are responsible for fixing Labor's disasters, we need the people of Queensland to come with us and they can only do that from a position of knowledge and understanding.

The Newman LNP government has been elected in its own right with a humbling mandate. It has not snuck into government because Queenslanders have finally recognised in great number just how bad a Labor government—the Bligh Labor government they elected in 2009—had become. They elected the Newman LNP government to get Queensland back on track, to implement our range of policies which we made everyone aware of during the elongated election campaign—both the overly long official campaign and the synthetic campaign which Labor started the day Campbell Newman was made leader of the Liberal National Party. No-one can say that they did not know what we would do in government. Every Queenslanders knows the can-do track record of the member for Ashgrove. Those policies, those commitments, are on the LNP website still today for all to see.

When introducing this bill the Treasurer was correct when he said—

The Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 amends legislation to give effect to a number of the government's election commitments, as we have spoken about earlier today. Specifically, it reinstates the transfer duty home concession; it increases the payroll tax exemption threshold; it freezes the tariff 11 electricity tariff prices for one year; it also facilitates the establishment of the Office of Best Practice Regulation; and it removes the requirement for sustainability declarations

In one stroke of the legislative pen the Treasurer has reversed the Bligh Labor government's tax slug on the family home. Remember that was the one that was dressed up as an initiative to stimulate the building industry and benefit first home buyers. Then Treasurer Andrew Fraser smiled his way through the introduction as the pretend friend of the first home buyer while simultaneously smashing their parents' investment in the family home and slipping his grasping paw into the family's accumulated wealth and transferring it to Victorians and others.

This bill will amend the Duties Act 2001 to reinstate the transfer duty home concession, the previous transfer duty rate structure and the previous phasing point of \$550,000 for the reducing rebate for the transfer duty first home concession for transactions entered into on or after 1 July 2012. It gives effect to the Newman LNP commitment to save homeowners up to \$7,000—an additional Bligh-Fraser tax on the purchase of the family home.

We on this side of the House understand the cost-of-living pressures on householders. We understand that the Bligh Labor government added about \$700 a year to household electricity bills while it squandered billions in reckless borrowed spending on capital projects and unsustainable recurrent expenditures. Those rises were on the back of Labor's solemn commitment that no-one would be worse off under Labor's electricity privatisation program. That is why this bill will amend the Electricity Act 1994 to freeze tariff 11, the standard regulated residential electricity tariff, at 2011-12 prices for one year from 1 July 2012.

Regrettably, however, there will be an increase in the household cost of electricity and this comes courtesy of federal Labor's carbon tax. This tax slug is courtesy of the Gillard Labor government, the self-proclaimed champion of working families. I am reminded of the adage 'with friends like these who needs enemies'. As the Bligh Labor government stumbled from one crisis of its own making to the next crisis of its own making, all semblance of coherent rational thinking deserted it. What better example could there be of this muddle-headed thinking than the total confusion between trying to create some environmental benefit and the effect of the sustainability declaration on the residential housing market. It is difficult to imagine a more stupid policy decision by the former government than this one, and we have legions of choices to take into consideration for that award.

It is very pleasing to see that this bill will amend the Building Act 1975 and the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000 to remove the requirements to prepare and provide a sustainability declaration prior to the sale of a residential dwelling. I know for a fact that my constituents in Noosa, whether a seller of a residential dwelling or a real estate agent involved in the transaction, will be cheering loudly and adding another toast to this government when celebrating the sale of the property.

In addition to meeting the first tranche of our promises on the cost-of-living pressures, this bill also amends the Payroll Tax Act 1971 to increase the exemption threshold from \$1 million to \$1.1 million from 1 July 2012 and there is a range of those to come as the years roll on. The key employing group in Australia is small business. The key to sustainable employment growth in Queensland is small business. We will be doing all we can to give a hand up to small business. This measure is the first step to fulfilling that promise.

The second step is also in this bill. It will also amend the Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997 to facilitate the establishment of an Office of Best Practice Regulation within the Queensland Competition Authority. No doubt the member for Nanango and Assistant Minister for Finance, Administration and Regulatory Reform who we just heard from will welcome this weapon in her arsenal as she attacks the red-tape cholesterol that is clogging the arteries of business, in particular small business. I am sure that this office will drive genuine, long-lasting and effective reform through all sectors.

There are many more boxes to be ticked. Rest assured, we will tick them. We will tick each and every one of them until our promises are delivered. I hope that those opposite, who created the chaos that we on this side of the House are systematically repairing, will not have the sheer gall to oppose this bill or any part of it. At the same time as we are trying to get the Queensland economy back on track, we are trying to restore Queenslanders' faith in democratic government. I invite members opposite to join us in this bipartisan quest by showing genuine remorse for what they collectively have done and support every measure, which is essential to rebuild trust and the economy.