



Speech by

**Michael Crandon**

**MEMBER FOR COOMERA**

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## **SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND WATER (DISTRIBUTION AND RETAIL RESTRUCTURING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (4.42 pm): I rise to contribute to debate on the South-East Queensland water restructuring bill. What a waste we have seen in so many ways—the establishment of the retail entities and the building of assets that have now been mothballed. One could argue that some of the assets should have been planned for and built, but not at any cost. The blow-out in cost for these assets is beyond belief and smacks of a government that has no concept of value for money. Concepts around money escape this government and have been escaping this government for a long time. As an example, earlier today in this House the member for Burleigh said that the return to the Gold Coast City Council is very lucrative. What the member for Burleigh does not understand and what this government does not understand is that it is a zero sum game for a council. The council does not make a profit. It is not a company. It does not go around making a quid and then distributing that dollar to its shareholders. It is an entity that is there to provide services to the community. If it did not make a profit that it could then invest into that community, the community would have to pay higher rates in order to provide the revenue required to invest in it.

So what has it meant for Queenslanders that this government has missed the point on the concepts of value for money and managing money? Firstly, Queenslanders will be paying off a debt for a very, very long time. We are talking about blow-outs in the order of \$2 billion to \$3 billion on the water grid, on the desal plant, on a Traveston Dam that will never be built—on all of those things. We are talking about billions of dollars—not millions. We are talking about thousands of millions of dollars.

**Mr Hoolihan:** Oh, really?

**Mr CRANDON:** I take the interjection. They are starting to get the point. We are talking about real money here. I remember a minister not too long ago pointing out to a media outlet that a loss of \$36 million was not in fact a loss because it was government money. They miss the point completely. It is not government money; it is money that belongs to Queenslanders. And it is a loss: it is a \$36 million loss. But the Labor government just seems to struggle with those sorts of concepts.

On top of the debt that will be paid off over an extended period of time, we have seen massive increases in the cost of water. On top of that, we have seen fuel cost increases and electricity price increases. And this comes on top of so many other increases—not just the types of increases that are foisted on people by government but also normal, day-to-day costs of living. That is just exacerbated by the nonsensical way in which this Labor government looks at managing finances and just throws money at things.

Ludicrous costs are being passed on to property owners under Allconnex. I will give an example. It was brought to my attention that people in my electorate who have invested some of their hard-earned money into such things as ship berths are now receiving a bill of \$90 for a half-year for the sharing of one tap on a wharf. These people rent out the berth or own a boat and moor their boat at their berth. They probably will not even use that tap for anything other than washing down their boat. But under this new

legislation, those individuals receive a bill of \$90 for a half-year—\$180 a year—just to have access to a tap which they will share with those in the berth beside them.

What did Allconnex provide as a service for this fee? They provided one pipeline into this particular complex. Everything else was laid by and is maintained by the body corporate within the complex. There is no justification for this fee. There should have been one bill for \$90 for that facility to accept that water because, at the end of the day, the facility does pay for the water that it uses so Allconnex is getting its money back. So these particular investors are providing a combined \$40,000 a year profit to Allconnex that is dragged out of them. They are still paying their \$90 a half-year at their home, at their business premises and so on, but they are collectively paying \$40,000 a year for the benefit of having one pipe coming into the complex. That is the kind of thing that this concept that was foisted on councils brought about for people.

This government has caused so much heartache for people, and it simply does not care. This is about the way Labor manages its finances. That is what it has been all about. That is why this bunfight has gone on. A number of people have had to put so much effort into convincing this government that this is just another Labor folly because Labor seems to have this idea that it knows everything there is to know and that it does it the right way, but it ends up overspending every which way. Just a moment ago I heard the member for Maroochydore say it in a far more succinct way than I, but I have to say that it is time for a change. It is time for Queensland to get back on track. We are looking forward to the end of this. We are looking forward to a campaign and we are looking forward to bringing Queensland back into the black over time using sensible financial concepts.