




Speech by

Michael Crandon

MEMBER FOR COOMERA

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TREASURY (COST OF LIVING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (10.34 pm): I rise to contribute to the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. Queensland's fiscal position and outlook is unsustainable and restoration must be an urgent priority for this term of government. That is stated in the incoming government brief, Treasury portfolio, page 1 dated March this year. Those words will be restated in this place time and time again to remind all of us, and in particular those sitting north-west of the member for Springwood—the Labor members of this House—that this government is determined in its resolve to get Queensland back on track.

The measures in this bill will bring cost-of-living relief to the residents of the state seat of Coomera. The people of Coomera, from Eagleby in the north to Helensvale in the south, out to Jacobs Well and right along the M1 have told me that enough is enough. For three years, they told me that as their member of the 53rd Parliament and they told me that at the polls. Taxes, fees and charges rising endlessly under the former Labor government were the exact opposite of what they needed. The fundamental difference between Labor and the LNP is this: Labor raises tax to pay for its waste and ill-thought through policies and, in so doing, it suppresses business activity; the LNP believes in cutting red tape, reducing cost to business and thus stimulating the economy and business. In turn, people become more able to live, to maintain their lifestyle and to think positively about the future. In turn, their feelings of abundance assist the economy to prosper. Thus, tax receipts increase, providing the funds for government to provide the services that our society demands. That is economics 101.

This bill delivers on our commitment to reduce the red tape burden on small business as promised during the recent election campaign. It offers a positive alternative to Labor's waste and constant attacks on family budgets. At the election this government received an overwhelming mandate to urgently address cost-of-living pressures for everyday Queenslanders. That mandate was reinforced in the state seat of Coomera, with a swing of more than 21 per cent.

Importantly, this bill will—as has been said before and will be said again—reinstate the transfer duty for the family home, increase the payroll tax exemption threshold from \$1 million to \$1.6 million over the next six years commencing with \$1.1 million to start immediately, freeze tariff 11 electricity prices for the next year, allow the establishment of the Office of Best Practice Regulation and remove the requirement for the ludicrous sustainability declarations. From memory, the debate on the bill that introduced those declarations was guillotined.

We fought tooth and nail to try to get this ridiculous document pulled out of the legislation, but to no avail. The people in the real estate industry did not get to see the document before it came to this place. We got to see the document the day before we were to debate it. The explanatory notes to that document were in six-point letters. I and others in this House were flat out reading them, let alone the people who would have to sign them, including the elderly. It contained thousands of dollars in fines. It was watered down, it was watered down and it was watered down. Recently, when I purchased a property I asked for the sustainability declaration. They knew who I was, where I was from and why I was asking for it. After

about 10 minutes they managed to find it. It was indeed signed and it was in the file, but no-one ever asks for the sustainability declaration. What does it cost Queensland in additional red tape to have this ridiculous piece of documentation?

This bill will help the people of the Coomera electorate to balance their household budgets. Thanks to Labor, Queensland's debt will rise to record levels—in the order of \$85 billion. That will generate an interest payment of \$5 billion a year, \$100 million a week and \$600,000 an hour. Yes, honourable members will have heard that before in the House. They will continue to hear it because we have to keep reminding ourselves that we cannot let this go on. This record debt has increased in spite of Labor pocketing \$15 billion for selling off Queensland assets. I recall the estimated debt was \$85 billion shortly after we came into this place in 2009, hence the reason for selling \$15 billion worth of assets. I remember doing the figures in my head and thinking, 'Okay, it's not a good idea. But, hey, \$15 billion off the top, that brings it down to \$70 billion. At least it's on the way down.' I was trying to weigh it up and trying to make sense of it. Guess what? After the sale there was an estimated \$85 billion of debt. An amount of \$15 billion was wasted through Labor's economic incompetence and Queensland has nothing to show for it—no extra infrastructure, no paying down of debt. Labor's legacy is failed projects and poorly targeted schemes which Queenslanders paid for through those increased fees, charges and taxes I spoke of earlier.

An amount of \$600 million was wasted on the failed Traveston Crossing Dam. Just the other day I met Travis. 'Travis?', you ask. 'Who on earth is Travis?' Let me tell you. Travis is a real turtle. Travis is the Mary River turtle that was taken from meeting to meeting to show people just one of the reasons the Traveston Dam should never be built. Travis, among other things, was a very good reason the project should never have commenced. The people of Queensland should never have paid out around \$500 million on a project that was destined to fail. If any members would like to see a photo of Travis after this evening's adjournment, I would be more than happy to show them. He is a real turtle. He is still doing the rounds of Queensland. I can assure members that he is a real turtle.

Then there is the \$1.1 billion Tugun desalination plant, the Queensland Health payroll debacle which will cost Queensland taxpayers more than \$400 million and the cost blow-out in the building of the Children's Hospital in the former Premier's own electorate, and the list goes on and on and on. How was this waste funded?

Mr Johnson: How is that desalination plant?

Mr CRANDON: I take the interjection from the member. I believe the desalination plant has been wound down but it is still costing us around \$17 million a year.

Mr Johnson: And it cost over \$1 billion to build?

Mr CRANDON: It cost \$1.1 billion to build. I take that interjection. How was this waste funded? It was funded by Queenslanders through taxes and increased charges, through hikes in electricity, water bills, public transport and car rego. Queensland is the most expensive state in which to own and operate a vehicle. Since 2008 the cost of registering a six-cylinder car has ballooned. Family power bills have increased around \$700 on average over the last five years. We have heard that already. Once again, we have to keep reminding ourselves and those opposite—those sitting north-west of the member for Springwood in the chamber—that that is what it is costing us.

Water bills are up \$200 a year. This government, through this bill, will deliver on our commitments to reduce the cost of living for all Queensland families. Because of stamp duty concessions on the Queensland family home, Queenslanders will save up to \$7,000 on the price of their home. This bill will, in turn, help stimulate activity in our property sector—a sector which I am told has been doing it very tough under Labor. My constituents will benefit from tariff 11 savings of, on average, \$120 a year. This bill will allow small business to prosper through the reduction of charges and red tape. Through the new payroll tax exemption threshold, approximately 1,200 employers—yes, we have heard it before; we have to keep reminding ourselves of why we are doing this—will benefit. Why are we getting tough with these measures? Because we need to get this economy kicked along. Those 1,200 employers who would otherwise be paying payroll tax in 2012-13 alone will now no longer be liable.

Excessive red tape, which is a major source of frustration for small business impacting on profitability, will be reduced by 20 per cent. The establishment of the Office of Best Practice Regulation is an important part of this commitment to cutting red tape. As stated earlier, this bill will introduce measures to scrap the ridiculous sustainability declaration. I am determined in my support for the LNP's commitment to tackling cost-of-living issues and building a four-pillar economy, a strong four-pillar economy, to get Queensland back on track and to help my constituents live from day to day.