




Speech by

Seath Holswich

MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

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TREASURY (COST OF LIVING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (5.48 pm): I rise in support of the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and to support the benefits that it will bring to Pine Rivers businesses and residents. It is actually quite a relief to be speaking after the member for Bundamba, because after that performance I could stand up here and recite nursery rhymes and add more to the debate than she added in that performance! The member for Bundamba made an interesting statement that the people of her electorate are actually better off now than they were a number of years ago. I would love to see her take that to the people of her electorate and actually ask them whether they are better off, because I am sure that she would get a far different story if she actually took the time to talk to her constituents about it.

We have an unfortunate situation in this state where Queenslanders have been paying the price and continue to pay the price for the Labor government's addiction to debt and its inability to balance a budget or to cut waste. Every Queenslander knows that in their family or business budget they cannot sustain a pattern where they continue to spend more than they earn for a prolonged period. The unfortunate reality for the families and residents of my electorate is that, instead of reining in the spending, instead of cutting the waste from its budgets, Labor continued to dive straight into further debt. Rather than making the hard decisions, Labor just decided to keep spending and take the easy option of hitting the hip pockets of Queenslanders to compensate for its economic ineptitude.

We now have a situation in this state where we are paying \$100 million a week in interest on the debt that that government accrued. The residents of my electorate would know that \$100 million would get them a bridge over Youngs Crossing. But how many years will they have to wait to get that bridge because we have to pay off the debt first? We have ended up seeing hardworking residents in Pine Rivers, many of whom have been struggling to keep their heads above water, taking hit after hit from the previous Labor government. Day after day, residents and businesses in Pine Rivers have been caught up in the crossfire caused by the inept previous Labor government.

If that is not enough, in a display of solidarity from Labor around the country, which we usually see only when they are out ousting a Prime Minister, in a display that is in Labor's DNA to increase the cost of living for no good reason, we currently have a federal Labor government running flat out towards a future that revolves around the carbon tax that is of questionable benefit to anyone and is of questionable benefit to our environment—all so that it can just be seen to be doing something. So rather than doing the right thing, rather than taking action that will benefit the environment and benefit Australian businesses and residents, Labor just charged towards bringing in a tax that will hurt businesses, hurt residents and hurt our country. It put up the smokescreen of compensation that it says will ease the impacts of the carbon tax on Australians. I do not know what dictionary it is reading from, but my dictionary says that you do not need to pay compensation if you are not hurting people. The carbon tax is a bad tax. It is being implemented poorly. It is just another example of the inability of a Labor government to effectively manage our economy and keep a check on cost-of-living increases.

My side of the House understands the cost-of-living pressures that are facing Queenslanders and we are willing to make the tough decisions to get our economy back on track—to cut the waste and to ease the cost of living for all Queenslanders. As I was campaigning in the lead-up to the recent election, I regularly took the opportunity to meet with commuters at railway stations and bus interchanges to talk with them about the cost-of-living issues that were hurting them. There was anger from many commuters but, more than anger, all too often there was a resignation from commuters that they would just have to get used to the fact that public transport fares would keep going up under a Labor government without their services or facilities improving noticeably to justify the increases. The increases in their fares were just disappearing into that Labor economic black hole. But it was not just commuters who I would talk to. I would talk to seniors, I would talk to other residents around the electorate—people who could not afford anymore to leave their homes more than once a week just to get their groceries. They could not afford to catch the bus anywhere, they could not afford a taxi, because for them the cost of living was just getting out of hand.

It is for the sake of residents like those that I am pleased to support this bill today. My government colleagues who were part of the previous parliament in this House rightfully opposed the disgraceful cost-of-living increases that Labor members sat in this House and voted for. Our government understands the cost-of-living pressure that is constantly felt by residents such as those in my electorate and in others. That is why we went to the last election with a plan to ease the cost of living for all Queenslanders. We went to the election with a plan to reduce the red tape that is strangling so many businesses in my electorate. We outlined a plan that will support and empower businesses. We were the only party that went to the election with a fully costed plan to reduce water and electricity prices for residents in my electorate and in others. We went to the election with a plan to reinstate stamp duty concessions because their removal was crippling the real estate industry and crippling homeowners.

What we see in this bill before the House is a plan to help Queensland businesses. This bill is the first step in delivering on our commitment to provide payroll tax relief to Queensland businesses. The raising of the payroll tax exemption from \$1 million to \$1.1 million in our first months of government is a positive step that will improve the prospects of many small businesses across my electorate. We also see in this bill a plan to support our real estate industry and homeowners.

Prior to the recent election it was a pleasure to have the now Attorney-General and Minister for Justice visit the Pine Rivers electorate to talk with local real estate agents about the pressures on their industry. It is no surprise that these real estate agents were delighted to see a future minister taking the time to listen to them. The desire to listen and to consult was something that they had not seen from the previous Labor government in many years. Those Pine Rivers real estate agents were telling us how the bottom fell out of the market the very day that Labor's tax on the family home came into effect.

A government member: They are good people, too.

Mr HOLSWICH: Absolutely. It was a bad decision from an economically incompetent Labor government and I am pleased to support this important legislation that overturns this counterproductive tax on the family home. I am also pleased to support legislation that will save Pine Rivers residents an average of \$120 a year on their electricity bills. Again, we are delivering on a commitment to Queenslanders to reduce the cost of living and reverse some of the hurt that was inflicted on them by the previous Labor government. As part of that commitment, we will also ensure that all Queenslanders know the full impact of the carbon tax on their electricity bill. There will be no hiding for Labor when its carbon tax starts to bite. This legislation will ensure that this flawed tax will be exposed for what it is: just another attempt to squeeze money out of the pockets of everyday Australians to cover up Labor's economic flaws.

This bill is an important step forward for Queensland. The measures contained within this bill are the first steps towards the delivery of our commitment to Queenslanders to reduce the cost of living. Only the now Newman government went to the election with a plan for Queensland. Only the Newman government has the economic credentials to reduce waste and debt in Queensland. In this House, only the Newman government is acting on behalf of all Queenslanders to reduce the cost of living. So while Labor members of this parliament continually refuse to apologise or try to correct the legacy of debt and waste that they presided over, our government is getting on with the job of building a strong economy, cutting waste and reducing the cost of living for residents and businesses in Pine Rivers and all across Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.