




Speech By  
**Curtis Pitt**

**MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE**

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**MOTION: NEWMAN GOVERNMENT**

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (5.38 pm): This Newman LNP government has failed on yet another of its infamous election contracts with Queenslanders, and this time it is its contract for the Gold Coast. Page 4 of its contract has the heading 'Cutting the cost of electricity'. The contract states—

The LNP will act to address the Gold Coast's rising household energy bills.

On this part of the contract the LNP government has recorded a resounding 'F' for fail.

This year electricity prices are increasing by a record 22.6 per cent, or \$268 on average, and are set to rise by more than \$190 next year. Before those opposite interject with their misleading claims about the carbon tax and solar, I point out that, if only the carbon tax and solar policies were impacting on prices, this year the increase would be just three per cent and not a record 22.6 per cent. Similarly, in the next financial year the increase would be just three per cent from a carbon price and solar, not 13.6 per cent. These are the independent figures from the Queensland Competition Authority. This year's electricity price increase includes a rise in the fixed cost or service charge for electricity of 92 per cent, or \$88. The fixed costs are set to go up again next year by another \$121, or 66 per cent. That means that even if people turn off their lights and try to save power they are still going to get slugged by the Newman government's power price slug. This increase in the fixed cost of electricity will generate extra revenue of \$421 million over two years. In response to a question on notice, the Minister for Energy and Water Supply has claimed that that increase is to keep the variable price of electricity low and pointed to an increase in the variable price of five per cent the next financial year. The minister's answer skilfully avoided the record-breaking 16 per cent increase in the variable price of electricity this year.

In April 2012 the Premier said that a pricing model that increased fixed costs was—

... robbing Peter to pay Paul, and we weren't going to agree to that—

and—

... the gain for some households ... was the pain incurred by a whole lot of others, and particularly, disadvantaged low-income households.

According to the Queensland Competition Authority, for a frugal single elderly person consuming lower than average electricity, their bill will increase by 27.9 per cent this financial year, which is higher than the average 22.6 per cent. That means that those who can afford it the least and who are trying to do the right thing are being hit the hardest by the Newman government's power price increases. It also means that the increase in the government electricity rebate for pensioners is likely to be less than their actual increase in bills as it is based on the average increase. So, while the Newman government rakes in the revenue from increasing the fixed cost of electricity, it is not providing commensurate support for the households who need it the most—and do not get me started on what the LNP's contract promised for water bills on the Gold Coast. It is enough to say that it has not reduced the cost of water on anybody's household bills.

Not only has the LNP fundamentally failed on its cost-of-living promises; it has failed in its election contract on infrastructure. Page 6 of the contract for the Gold Coast states—

We'll seek stronger community input, and plan better to map out the future and provide the infrastructure that the Gold Coast needs.

I am not sure where this community input came from when the Deputy Premier decided that he was going to announce the push for a cruise ship terminal and an integrated casino on the Broadwater with the potential to destroy the Gold Coast's priceless surf breaks, or who on the Gold Coast was consulted about the infrastructure budget being cut by \$91.6 million last financial year as set out in the budget papers. There was not any consultation on the sale of hospital land at the Gold Coast, and it would be safe to assume that that will not be the last example.

Last week the Treasurer showed up at the Gold Coast claiming to seek community input, albeit as part of his invite-only, closed-door asset sale lecture tour. What did the Treasurer have to tell people on the Gold Coast about delivering future infrastructure for the region? He told them that he would be 'Mr Freeze'. It is interesting to see all the LNP MPs line up to take credit for the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project or the Gold Coast University Hospital while simultaneously condemning Labor's debt that they used to fund it. While the Treasurer travels around making alarming claims about debt and an interest bill of \$450,000 an hour, he fails to mention that, under his watch, debt is increasing by more than \$830,000 per hour, or by \$14.6 billion over two years. The Treasurer is happy to cut the ribbons at projects funded by his increase in debt while simultaneously blaming Labor for it. This Treasurer is slowly starting to learn that you cannot have your cake and eat it too. For the record, Labor never recorded an interest bill of \$450,000 per hour. To say otherwise is false.

The Gold Coast's 10—sorry, make that nine—LNP MPs after the member for Gaven saw the light and said to all of those people over there, 'Yes, you can leave the cult' certainly have a lot of explaining to do to their electorates about why this contract with Queenslanders should be torn up. I can guarantee members that they will not find the Premier being able to find a lawyer anywhere who will help him out with breach of contracts, because no-one wants to talk him. It is a contract that would make a great direct mail piece for the next election campaign should these MPs want to get another turn at the election.