




Speech By  
**Julianne Gilbert**

**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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Record of Proceedings, 3 June 2015

**TRANSPORT LEGISLATION (FEES) AMENDMENT REGULATION (NO. 1):  
DISALLOWANCE OF STATUTORY INSTRUMENT**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (8.33 pm): I rise to oppose the disallowance motion moved by the member for Indooroopilly. Make no mistake: the previous LNP government had no intention of freezing registration. The members opposite can grandstand all they like, like the member for Whitsunday, who just said that he is interested in having ferries in his area. I am not sure where they would run from—the Gooseponds or maybe along the Prossie River? What a waste of money. The bottom line is that the previous LNP government planned to end the freeze. The LNP's own 2014-15 budget confirms that. It had the same 3.5 per cent increase in registration fees.

**Mr Costigan** interjected.

**Mrs GILBERT:** I take that interjection. All that yelling that he did was exciting. The increase was included in the LNP's forward estimates, not just once but twice. It is the height of hypocrisy for the members opposite to stand up in this House tonight and pretend otherwise. They are the great pretenders. They say one thing and they do another. They have form. They looked workers in the eye and they said that their jobs would be safe. Then they went ahead and sacked 24,000 workers. That was a disgraceful, sad chapter in Queensland's history. They left behind a legacy of broken promises to Queenslanders. They planned to cut jobs and services and concessions for Queenslanders doing it tough. They planned to sell vital public assets and they planned a 3.5 per cent increase in registration fees. They have learned nothing from the mistakes of the past; they are the same old LNP members.

Although it is necessary to index all fees and charges, the Palaszczuk government will continue to look after those vulnerable Queenslanders who are doing it tough. We all know the LNP's record on cost-of-living expenses. Under the previous LNP government, electricity prices went through the roof. Queenslanders were hit hard with a 43 per cent increase in their electricity bills—on average, a \$440 increase over three years. We all know the real impact that that increase in the cost of electricity had on households. A recent report from the Queensland Competition Authority shows that last year the number of households disconnected for nonpayment of their power bills reached a record high of 26,636. Under the LNP, the price hikes went up and up and up. Of the total disconnections for nonpayment, more than 22 per cent were pensioners. Our most vulnerable Queenslanders had their power cut off because they could not pay their bills, which had skyrocketed under the previous LNP government. Worse still, in that same year the LNP picked on pensioners in its state budget. Pensioners will never forget the LNP's plan writ large in its 2014 budget papers to cut \$54 million in concessions.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring that households are able to manage their cost-of-living pressures. That is why we have introduced new payment schemes, including the option to pay registration fees every three months. I know that will help families in my electorate. The payment scheme will be available for cars, motorcycles and trailers, giving motorists an option for an all-in-one direct debit package. This new plan offers householders options to manage their budgets and save. It makes sense to be able to roll registration into households budgets, planning without

waiting for six months or 12 months. As part of the introduction of this new option, the Queensland government is also reducing the surcharge for six-monthly registration fees from 1 July. The introduction of these charges is part of our drive to continue to improve the services that we offer to Queenslanders.

Importantly, if the registration freeze were to continue for the next four years, this would lead to a loss in revenue of \$518 million. That is more than half a billion dollars. Those members opposite would cut road projects to make up for this massive shortfall. That spells bad news for the planned Mackay ring-road in my electorate. It is a \$565 million investment that is going to deliver 600 jobs. So, after three years of careful planning, one of Mackay's largest infrastructure projects may end up on the scrap heap. Stage 1 includes an 11-kilometre, two-lane highway bypass, which means that motorists will avoid 10 sets of traffic lights from Stockroute Road to Bald Hill Road. There would also be 14 new bridges, local road overpasses and major waterway crossings over the Pioneer River and the Fursden Creek flood plain.

This project is important for those people who live and work in Mackay. It is also important for the people who live in the neighbouring electorates of Mirani and Whitsunday, and the member for Whitsunday wants to vote against this. We cannot afford not to have this ring-road. That is why I urge the members of this House to vote against this destructive motion moved by the member for Indooroopilly.

As a former minister for transport and main roads he should know better. He should know how important the road network is for people in regional Queensland. He should know that for many regional communities a safe and reliable road network is absolutely vital.