




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Payday Lenders

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (2.37 pm): The Palaszczuk Labor government has taken decisive action to relieve the burden from Queenslanders who are doing it tough because of payday lenders. Good Money stores in Cairns and Southport are places where people can get access to the No Interest Loan Scheme and affordable insurance and savings programs and can also speak directly with a financial counsellor when things get tough. The stores will be a lifeline for cash-strapped Queenslanders who now have a real alternative to shonky payday lenders and a source of support for people who are wanting a bit of help with controlling their finances and managing the cost of living.

We know that 31 per cent of households in Australia are experiencing financial stress and that right now 14.8 per cent of Queenslanders are at risk of poverty. Good Money stores deliver real alternatives to unscrupulous payday lenders and rent-to-buy schemes to make sure that people do not spiral into debt, especially women, who are the fastest growing demographic who are accessing payday loans. Reducing the financial stress being felt by vulnerable people is also a way of growing the Queensland economy.

These Good Money stores help people like Brett, whom I met at the Southport Good Money store. He sought help to get back on his feet after having some trouble with payday lenders. He told an all-too-familiar story. A payday lender had charged exorbitant—and, I might add, illegal—fees for a loan to Brett so that he could pay some of his bills. The Good Money store was able to help Brett with a financial counsellor who could advocate on his behalf and secure a refund of these illegal fees.

Since the opening of the Good Money store in Cairns on 10 April, that store has had almost 577 inquiries for assistance and approved almost 100 no-interest loans valued at \$77,000. That Good Money store has also made nine referrals to other agencies to enable people experiencing specific vulnerabilities to obtain further assistance. The Good Money store at Southport has already received more than 500 inquiries and assisted dozens of people to reach a more stable financial position.

The Palaszczuk Labor government is giving struggling Queenslanders a chance at getting back on top of their finances and taking control of their lives. While we are fighting to ensure that ordinary Queenslanders have access to fair lending and responsible financial advice, the LNP in Canberra continues to drag its heels, making it easier for shonky lenders to lock more people into spiralling debt. I find it appalling that the federal government will stand by and let Queenslanders facing cost-of-living pressures fall victim to unscrupulous payday lenders.