




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BUDERIM

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ADJOURNMENT

Buderim Electorate, Cost of Living

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (7.18 pm): I rise today to address the crippling cost of living and its impacts on residents in my electorate of Buderim. The unabated rise in the cost of living for Queenslanders has hit our seniors more than most. Last week I met with a group of constituents living in a Buderim retirement village who have formed a committee to collectively tackle the rising cost of water and electricity. These residents explained to me that some retirees had taken to skipping meals and avoiding the use of heaters and air conditioning because they could not afford to pay for their electricity. They spoke about the angst that had already been caused by higher bulk water prices within their community. Unfortunately, I explained to these residents that things were going to get worse very soon due to the recent decision to increase bulk water prices on the Sunshine Coast by another eight per cent.

These seniors, who have worked all of their lives and now want to enjoy retirement, are bearing the brunt of Labor's flawed legacy with an almost 400 per cent increase in bulk water prices over the last 10 years. Recently the LNP moved a motion calling on the Palaszczuk Labor government not to accept QCA's recommendation to increase water prices. Despite the then treasurer saying that Labor should consider such an option in September last year, this government did not see fit to support saving Queenslanders the added burden of huge increases in water.

We have seen this Labor government impose five new taxes in yesterday's budget that are worth \$2.2 billion. If we are to believe the Treasurer, these taxes will only be borne by one per cent of Queenslanders, but such a statement is nothing more than spin. The \$2.2 billion will be borne by every Queenslanders regardless of whether they pay the tax directly or in the form of more expensive goods and services. This is a government that pretends to care about seniors and the vulnerable but is happy to dip into their pockets when it suits their short-term political interests.

One does not have to look too far to see the impact that higher electricity prices are having on Queenslanders everywhere. While those opposite will spruik the fact that electricity prices have gone down in the last quarter, they conveniently forget that their own state-owned electricity generators have been gouging Queenslanders through price manipulation for years. Just last year alone Queenslanders paid \$759 million more for electricity because Labor choose to use electricity prices as a hidden tax. Labor have been taking from the pockets of our seniors for the last three years, and now they try to claim they are supporting them by giving them back some of these ill-gotten gains in the form of rebates and subsidies.

Seniors in Buderim are hurting. Queenslanders across the state are hurting. The cost of water, electricity and fuel are becoming unsustainable. When you add the burden of the additional taxes that are going to be felt by all Queenslanders, it is little wonder that seniors have to sacrifice meals and their comfort just to get by. Driving down the cost of living needs to be a priority for all Queenslanders.