




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Federal Subsidies

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (2.04 pm): I rise to inform the House about another round of mean-spirited Turnbull government cuts that will take money out of the pockets of families in my area. The Turnbull government changes to the childcare rebate and benefits will begin on 1 July and will adversely affect 2,239 families in and around the federal electorate of Longman. I thank Susan Lamb MP for alerting me to this issue. Both payments will be abolished and replaced with a childcare subsidy.

In addition to the \$1.6 billion worth of cuts Queensland faces because of the Turnbull government's proposed GST carve-up, there are more Turnbull government cuts that will make life harder for Queensland families. This is what we know so far about the damage to be done to local families. Some families will be cut out entirely. Households with an income of less than \$65,000 will have their benefits cut. Families must now satisfy a complex set of rules to get the childcare subsidy, including a work test and a means test. Families will be required to satisfy minimum levels of approved activities each week. If they have a problem, what do they have to do? They have to get onto the phone queue at Centrelink and wait their turn.

What does this mean for Queensland families? It means that thousands of families in Queensland will be knocked out of the system. Whereas they once got the childcare rebate and benefit, they will not get the childcare subsidy. The level of subsidy will be reduced by an additional 10 per cent childcare tax. Where a family earning less than \$65,000 would expect to get 85 per cent of the subsidy, they will now get only 75 per cent. Those expecting 50 per cent of the subsidy will get only 40 per cent.

There are so many questions from Queensland families. How will casual workers meet this work test if they have variable rosters and hours? Will the guardians of children in the child safety system, especially grandparents, continue to receive support? What about families where one parent gets a carer payment? Will that push their income over the \$65,000 threshold? This is terrible news for Queensland families. Not only are we facing about \$1 billion in cuts to Queensland hospitals in the health system from the federal government, but from 1 July many Queensland families will find that they do not receive that childcare subsidy anymore or that it has been significantly reduced.

The Palaszczuk government is doing so much to help support Queensland families—the appliance rebate, the electricity rebate for families, an extension of discounts to white card veterans, and eligible families can get a \$340 rebate on electricity or \$71 on gas—but we are constantly being undermined by the parsimonious, penny-pinching practices of the federal government. I appeal to all members in this House to ensure they know exactly what Queensland families will face after 1 July, do whatever they can to raise this issue with the Turnbull government and say once again that this is not good.