




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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TRANSPORT LEGISLATION (FEES) AMENDMENT REGULATION

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (6.03 pm): I rise to speak against this motion. I do so aware that the popular thing to do is always to freeze rates, but good leadership and popularity do not always go hand in hand. Any parent in this chamber will know that. Leadership is about doing the right thing in the face of opposition. Labor turns up to this place every day determined to lead, to do what is best for Queensland, to make the hard decisions. Those opposite would rather play to the masses, aware that they are not accountable for these decisions. It is easy to call for rates, levies and fees to be frozen, repealed or disallowed. It is easy when you have no commitment to the welfare and care of those who depend on you. Each individual decision cannot be made in isolation. There are always consequences. It is essentially Newton's third law of physics: for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. For every decision there is a pair of forces acting on it—forces that are equal and opposite, action and reaction.

In government the LNP preferred to steer clear of physics and adopted Campbell Newman's law of economics. Under 'Newman's law', for every rates freeze there was an equal, sometimes greater, reduction in services. For example, on the one hand the LNP abolished the waste levy. In turn, that opened the door to interstate dump trucks dumping their waste in Ipswich. In another example, the LNP froze power price increases but at the same time slashed the Solar Bonus Scheme and feed-in tariff. The LNP in government, using 'Newman's law' again, froze car registration increases for three years. Clearly it was a popular thing to do, but at the same time third-party insurance premiums rose, effectively negating that for consumers anyway. Using 'Newman's law', the LNP realised that the only way to deliver was not through rates that affect its core constituency, not levies that the big end of town pays, but by selling assets and privatising public services—the services ordinary Queenslanders rely on.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members.

Ms HOWARD: They do not like it. We see it today. The government's infrastructure plans are stymied by the Morrison government's ideologically-driven agenda of privatisation. In order to fund major road upgrades—upgrades that are essential to ensuring Queensland motorists are kept safe, that are needed for businesses and industry to progress and that will support our economic advancement—the federal coalition tied its infrastructure funding to privatisation and to asset sales. It is a disgrace. The federal coalition government is holding our safety and our prosperity to ransom over an outdated and unworkable policy designed to make government smaller and services profitable. It is pure ideology and it has no place in this great state of ours.

Corporatising and privatising services do not make them work better. Just look at Australia Post. Once the heart of every community across the nation, the humble post office is now disappearing. Just recently, Australia Post threatened to shut down altogether the Ipswich CBD post office. Apparently, it was not economically profitable. It is a great example of what happens when we put economics before people. Unlike Newton's law of physics, a natural law that is agreed upon by experts, effectively Campbell Newman's law of economics was a massive con. They gave with one hand while wielding a scythe with the other, because one cannot freeze a rate without there being a consequence, intended

or unintended. They might think it is popular, but there will always be an economic and social consequence. That is the hard lesson of leadership, a lesson that clearly the LNP has not learned since its election loss in 2015.

On the other hand, the Palaszczuk government is delivering a small increase in registration fees and is investing in infrastructure. The government's investment in my area alone includes: route planning for the Ipswich-Springfield rail corridor; 19 new services on the Ipswich/Rosewood and Springfield lines; the East Ipswich station upgrade to make it accessible to people with disability, people with prams, people travelling with suitcases—it is part of the \$357 million Station Accessibility Upgrade Program; investment in bikeways across Ipswich and new developments in Deebing Creek; \$890,000 for the installation of wide centre lines on the Centenary Highway between Yamanto and Springfield Central; the \$635 million Warrego Highway Upgrade Program, with a \$400 million boost secured in this budget; and let us not forget the Ipswich Motorway upgrade, with work occurring between Rocklea and Darra or the Logan Motorway upgrade streamlining the access to the Gateway Motorway extension.

These investments are part of the Palaszczuk government's record \$23 billion investment in roads and transport infrastructure over four years. This is our government's fourth record Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program, or QTRIP, out of five. The new QTRIP sees an overall increase of more than \$1.3 billion across the four-year period when compared to the previous QTRIP. Our investment in roads and transport infrastructure will sustain 21,500 jobs across Queensland during the life of the program. Of this, approximately \$14.5 billion, or more than 63 per cent, is funded primarily by the Palaszczuk government. Investment outlined in the new QTRIP specifically allocated to regional Queensland is \$14½ billion, or more than 63 per cent. As I said, this jobs-first, regions focused program will sustain over 21½ thousand jobs.

Under our government's procurement policies we ensure that more of the benefits flow to local communities in the region where this money is invested. The money collected from registration fees helps fund this infrastructure and helps support jobs in regional Queensland. Any reduction in the money collected from registration would mean a reduction in the money spent on roads and transport infrastructure. I know that is what my constituents care about.

The LNP's proposal in this motion will create a funding black hole which they have no plan to pay for. We know that they have over \$9 billion in unfunded promises. They have not told anyone how they plan to fund them. That brings me back to Campbell Newman's law of economics. If the LNP have not told us where this \$9 billion is coming from, you can bet it will come from asset sales, privatisation or worse. What is worse than that? Nuclear power plants. Just how much would an LNP government plan to make out of selling our state to nuclear power industries? The nuclear lobby would happily put a couple of nuclear power plants in Ipswich, I am sure. Swanbank, Wivenhoe Dam—that is right: right on the banks of our region's water supply. Past behaviour is the surest indicator of future behaviour. The LNP's plan is always to cut, sack and sell. It is in their DNA.

I want to address the issue the LNP claims to be addressing—that is, cost-of-living relief. As I have explained, there is no cut that does not have a consequence, and the LNP never saw a cut they did not embrace. The real issue here is making sure we provide the services Queenslanders need and every assistance to help them pay the cost of registration. Currently, all registered operators can renew their registration for three, six or 12 months. The Department of Transport and Main Roads also provides eligible customers with the option of paying by direct debit. Direct debit provides customers with the ability to take up three-month registration payment terms, allowing them to make smaller and more manageable payments.

TMR is also actively investigating shorter registration terms to provide more manageable registration payment terms and further assist with the cost of living. It already offers a payment option called the planned payment scheme, operated through Australia Post. This scheme enables motorists to pay registration renewal fees in instalments by making regular deposits of \$40 throughout the year before their registration expires. In 2016 a variety of services were developed to help customers make payments on time. The following services were delivered in 2016 to assist customers make their registration payment, because Labor understands that people sometimes need a helping hand.

It is no surprise that the member for Chatsworth has brought this motion forward. The member for Chatsworth has made ridiculous claims in the past that Labor wants to put up prices and attack traditional Australian values, claiming minority groups are a threat to our way of life—a claim supported by the member for Clayfield when he was the party leader. He has plenty of things to say about cutting prices, locking young offenders in prison and building infrastructure but nothing to say about how they will pay for these things. Let me conclude with an article quoting former prime minister Paul Keating. It states—

'Liberal economics is going nowhere' ... 'It has now led us into a kind of dead end.' Liberal economists did not anticipate the global financial crisis of 2008 and had no real solution to the problem of growing inequality ...