




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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**WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING (WASTE LEVY) AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.31 pm): I stand to speak on this bill. As has already been stated by the shadow minister, the LNP will be voting against this bill. The first thing I want to do is express my utmost sympathy to the member for Broadwater for that absolute savaging by the member for Stretton. I can just imagine that when the member for Stretton stands up at one of his branch meetings they all go, 'He's on his feet again.' He is more than a factional war lord, that is for sure.

It is hard to go past what has already been said by the member for Broadwater and the member for Scenic Rim. When we talk about this levy all we are talking about is a con and a sham. The Queensland Labor government is once again duping the Queensland public. Of course this is not for the environment: this is simply a tax grab. This is not a bill that originated from the Minister for Environment: this is a bill that originated from the Treasurer. Why is that the case and why is that necessary?

The Labor Party has a problem. Because they put on around 25,000 to 30,000 extra public servants in the last four years, we have an extra \$7 billion recurring expenditure year after year and they simply do not have the money to pay for it. What do they do? They do not introduce one or two new taxes or even three or four: they introduce five new taxes. They announced four of them a couple of days before the last election campaign, and this is the one they did not announce. The waste tax was brought in after the election without any mention of it whatsoever. In fact, there were some who denied beforehand that it would happen, but of course that is what this government does.

They brought in the grey nomad tax, which will tax those hardworking Queenslanders who have saved up to pay for their around-the-country holiday, and that is going to bring in \$100 million. They brought in the wagering tax, which will bring in \$367 million. They brought in an extra land tax for another \$311 million and the foreign acquirer tax, which will bring in another \$132 million, but the tax that really brings home the bacon is this waste tax: \$1.3 billion over the forward estimates will be brought in due to this—not levy—tax.

In a rare admission they have said that at least 30 per cent of this tax will go into general revenue, so all of this talk about this being an environmental levy is a total con job. This is money that is required by this government to pay for their election commitments. When you do not have money—when you are heading towards a debt of \$83 billion—you have a problem and you have to find a solution, and the only solution is to increase taxes.

They also have a second problem: how do they justify bringing in this wagering tax? This is where they get very, very creative. They go to the disgraced Labor Ipswich City Council, which has now been dissolved—a council that has in some ways promoted these dumps in their area—and they say, 'We have a problem, and we have to solve that problem,' which is a localised issue that no other council in the state has other than the Ipswich City Council. Then they looked for another excuse to bring the

implementation date forward, and what was their excuse? It was a 'recycling issue' in the council. We now have a recycling issue, so we need to bring the tax in earlier to deal with this recycling issue. The issue was dealt with about four days after it was first highlighted because of an uproar from the public. Then the planning minister said that he could not interfere with the planning processes of the council, so the government could not intervene in those things. Then a couple of weeks later he changed his mind and said, 'No, we can do that,' but again that was tinkering around the edges. The only solution was a levy. Guess what? Because we have a localised problem in Ipswich—

Ms Leahy: Mount Isa has to pay!

Mr MANDER: I will take that interjection from the member for Warrego—Mount Isa has to pay; Everton has to pay; Broadwater has to pay; Bonney has to pay; the Gold Coast has to pay. Right across the state has to pay for a problem that is localised in the Ipswich area. The problem could have been resolved if they were fair dinkum about solving that local issue in other ways.

Mr Millar: Western Queensland has to pay!

Mr MANDER: That is exactly right; I will take that interjection. We now have a new tax that will bring in \$1.3 billion. The minister is at pains to assure us that this will not be passed on to everyday Queenslanders. It is really important to note the language of the minister when she emphasises the fact that there will not be a direct impact on everyday Queenslanders. That is questionable, but even if that is correct there will be an indirect impact on everyday Queenslanders. That is not what the LNP is saying: that is what industry groups are saying.

Master Builders has come out and said that this levy is nothing but a tax on construction, and they think it will add at least \$2,000 to the cost of building a new home. Garry Sharman from the Housing Industry Association estimated that the levy will add \$1,500 to the cost of building a two-storey detached home. Is that a direct cost or is it an indirect cost? It does not really matter what it is: it is an extra cost. Luke Hannan from the Local Government Association of Queensland says its analysis found that the waste levy would cost councils about \$12 million for key services such as sewerage, road maintenance and facilities. These are the lobby groups that have come out, but I can assure you that when this tax is introduced Queensland consumers, when they get their car serviced every six months, will be paying extra because of the cost that will be imposed on mechanics and garages.

I have already mentioned what happens with new houses and local government services. Who knows whether the price of fish and chips will go up because of the extra cost of the shops ridding themselves of the waste? Of course those costs will be passed on, because small business cannot absorb them.

Let us call this what it is. This is not a levy. This was not brought in for environmental reasons; this was brought in because the government needs cash badly, despite the fact that it has benefited from unexpected coal royalties and the boom that has happened in the past 12 months. It has had a lucky break. The extra money that has come in from coal royalties is not enough, so the government has to find another way of raising money. We now have five new taxes.

This stands in contrast to the LNP. We have stated already that if we get a chance to be in government we will not introduce any new taxes. We understand how these taxes impact on business and business confidence. When you dampen business confidence, you dampen the job opportunities that can come through business and through people who have confidence in the future of this state. We will call this tax what it is. Once this tax is introduced, we will be reminding people as they use different services of the negative impact of this tax on them.