




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Cashless Debit Card

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (2.50 pm): Pensioners are Australia's battlers. They have worked all their lives and deserve to enjoy their retirement, but Scott Morrison, Michelle Landry, Matt Canavan and the LNP are out to stop 2.6 million Australian pensioners from having a meal at a pub, buying a scratchie or fresh fruit and veggies at the markets by forcing all pensioners onto the Cashless Debit Card across every corner of Queensland.

Mr Bennett: That's just not true!

Ms LAUGA: I will be pleased to inform the member for Burnett over the next four minutes. Anne Ruston, the federal LNP Minister for Families and Social Services, admitted in a Channel 7 interview—

We're seeking ... to put all income management onto the universal platform which is the Cashless Debit Card ...

The LNP has also enshrined the Cashless Debit Card for pensioners in the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Continuation of Cashless Welfare) Bill 2020. I table a copy of the bill for members' information.

Tabled paper: Extract from the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Continuation of Cashless Welfare) Bill 2020, page 14 [2018](#).

Ms LAUGA: I wonder if the member for Burnett was at the LNP State Council.

Mr Bennett: I was, actually.

Ms LAUGA: The LNP State Council passed a motion calling for the card to be expanded across Queensland. I take that interjection from the member for Burnett. How many of those members opposite were present at this LNP State Council when they made this decision? How many of those members opposite voted in support of the Cashless Debit Card to be rolled out across Queensland?

Mr Bennett: I did.

Ms LAUGA: I will take that interjection from the member for Burnett, who just confirmed that he did vote in support of rolling out the Cashless Debit Card across Queensland.

We have an aged-care crisis that remains unaddressed and not responded to, Medicare rebates for critical hip, hand and shoulder surgeries that were cut under the cover of COVID from 1 July, and now the LNP want to force age pensioners onto the cashless pension card. We should not be surprised. The LNP's plan to expand the card and force pensioners onto it means the government would be able to control where pensioners and vulnerable Aussies spend 80 per cent of their income.

It is not like an ordinary bank debit card. The government and a private company would control when, where and how pensioners can spend their own money, what kinds of shops they can and cannot shop at, and what they can and cannot buy in those shops. There are already three venues in Central Queensland where these cards cannot be used: Pacific Hotel, Keppel Bay Sailing Club and the Frenchville Sports Club. I table a copy of a list of the Cashless Debit Card's blocked merchants.

Tabled paper: Bundle of documents regarding the use of cashless debit cards [2019](#).

I encourage all members to have a look at the list of blocked merchants in their respective electorates. It is quite concerning that at a large number of them—over 800—you are not able to use these cards. It is absolutely awful that people are already banned from buying a coffee, meal or beer at these three venues using the cashless welfare card. Two of these venues are community clubs that support local sporting teams. It concerns me greatly that anyone on the cashless welfare card will not be able to pay for their kids' or grandkids' sport registration fees and uniforms at these sporting clubs. How many other venues are going to be blocked in Central Queensland when the LNP rolls this card out to pensioners?

They even have a secret technology working group committee with the big banks, Australia Post and all of the big retailers that is trying to work out how they can do product-level blocking to control exactly which products people can buy. It is disgraceful. This government thinks it knows better than Australians how to spend their money. The vast majority of pensioners manage their money perfectly well. They know where every cent goes. If this card scheme gets through, pensioners would not be able to pay cash to buy cheap food at their local market, second-hand goods, a meal or a beer at the RSL, or give cash to their grandkids. This shocking scheme comes after eight years of cuts to the pension and attacks on pensioners by the Liberals and Nationals. Mr Morrison is not on the side of pensioners.

I am calling on the federal member for Capricornia and LNP Senator Matt Canavan to: apologise to Australian pensioners for the cashless pension control card plan; repeal all legislation that enables the cashless card and scrap the scheme; cancel the contract with Indue, the private company that runs and profits from the cashless card scheme; and stop the further privatisation of Centrelink. Labor will fight the federal government's plan to expand the shameful Cashless Debit Card and force it onto pensioners. A federal Labor government would abolish the privatised card. Labor will continue to fight this cruel card. Only an Albanese Labor government will scrap it completely if elected.