




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cost-of-Living Rebate; Budget

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (10.10 am): Labor governments always govern for people who are doing it tough—people who are disadvantaged, people who need help with rising prices, the forgotten people who got left behind by the Morrison government. That is why I am so proud that our first major announcement from the forthcoming state budget is the cost-of-living rebate for the owners of Queensland's electricity assets—the people of Queensland. Why is it that our government can help people on their power bills when they need it most? It is because we own our energy assets.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Everton will cease his interjections.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member for Maroochydore is standing in front of the camera.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! I call the Treasurer.

Mr DICK: Can I just say it again. That is why I am so proud that the first major announcement from the forthcoming budget is the cost-of-living rebate for the owners of Queensland's electricity assets—the people of Queensland. Why is it that our government can help people on their power bills when they need it most? It is because we own our energy assets. This is \$385 million going into the pockets of hardworking Queenslanders, and that is money well spent.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The level of interjection is too high, members on my left. I ask that you cease your interjections or I will start naming members.

Mr DICK: Every one of those \$385 million is money well spent. This is just the start of the good news for Queenslanders in the countdown towards next month's state budget. In around one month's time, all members will see the eighth budget of the Palaszczuk Labor government, and I could not be more excited because I think it will be the best Labor government budget yet. The budget will show that Queenslanders are continuing to reap the rewards of our state's superior management of COVID-19. Just as we demonstrated in our last budget, compared to our competitor states, Queensland will have a faster return to surplus, smaller deficits and much lower debt. Lower debt is a good thing. It means a lower interest burden and it creates the capacity to invest in the infrastructure that our growing state needs.

The budget will also reflect the fact that Queensland's domestic economy is 6.3 per cent larger than it was before COVID, driven by strong retail sales, strong investment and strong jobs growth. By comparison, Australia's GDP is only 3.7 per cent larger. Importantly, the budget will reflect the fact that Queensland has led the way and has completely dominated the nation when it comes to jobs growth. There are now 145,500 more Queenslanders in work than there were before COVID-19.

Mr Lister: How many of them worked in the Premier's media unit?

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Southern Downs, you are warned under the standing orders.

Mr DICK: We heard a lecture earlier today from members opposite about not insulting other members of parliament. That lasted about five minutes. Since the depths of the pandemic in May last year, more than 348,000 Queenslanders have found employment as Queensland continues its economic recovery. In net terms, 400,000 Queenslanders have found work under our government since 2015.

Mr Janetzki interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Toowoomba South is warned under the standing orders.

Mr DICK: That is more than 1,000 jobs each week, every week, since our election. Strong employment growth will continue because the budget will show us backing new industries and new innovation. That means not only more jobs but also more high-paid and high-skilled jobs. We will also be investing in better services in key areas like education, child safety, police and health. We are checking the numbers, but it is shaping up to be the biggest health budget in Queensland history. That is not all.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection. Someone said 'every year'. The members opposite cut the mental health budget in this state when they were in government. They were the first state government ever to do it. Imagine cutting funding to mental health. That is the LNP legacy.

The budget will fund better roads and transport, more infrastructure in regional Queensland and more investment in agriculture. Very importantly, the budget will fund the recommendations of the first report of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce. This will be a budget for all Queenslanders, a genuine Labor budget that will set up our state to take advantage of the golden decade ahead.