




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 30 November 2022

MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Cost of Living

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.41 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Toowoomba South. It is an opportunity to provide a reality check for those opposite, to enlighten those opposite and talk about the here and now. They want to stand in here tonight and talk about the past and talk about the history. However, we are talking about the here and now and the cost of living in Queensland—right here, right now in Queensland. I want to put on my rural and regional affairs hat tonight and enlighten those opposite. The Premier stood up in this place yesterday and would have us believe that the cost of living is not an issue because unemployment is down. It is an issue all right and it is an issue that is causing a lot of concern, a lot of angst and a lot of heartache in rural and regional Queensland.

We have heard about the impact on the learner's permits. Why not add to that? What about the kid who lived at the Belyando Crossing who drives to Clermont, 175 kilometres one way, to get his learner's permit? What about that additional cost on top of the rip-off by this government imposed on our learner drivers, not to mention the roads they are driving on, the roads that are wrecking their vehicles. I saw that firsthand on the weekend when I went to the opening of the bridge on the Bowen River. All I could see for 25 kilometres on that goat track was tyres. A mother told me that she cannot drive into Collinsville without blowing a tyre at least once a week. She is driving with her kids in the car to take them to school and every week she is changing a tyre on the side of the road because of the poor condition of the roads in that patch.

Ms Grace: Rubbish! Rubbish!

Mr LAST: I take that interjection.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order, members. The level of interjection is extreme.

Mr LAST: I take that interjection from the education minister, and what a disgrace that comment was. I can tell the education minister that because of the lack of teachers in my electorate parents are taking their kids out. They are moving to the major centres to give them an education because the subjects are not being offered in the school, and that is another cost they have to wear.

Let's talk about electricity prices. I am glad the energy minister is in the chamber tonight. Let's go back to 2016 when the Productivity Commission recommended to this government that people in regional Queensland should have choice. If people live in Townsville or Cairns they do not have choice in electricity providers. There is no choice. I went onto the federal government's Energy Made Easy website today and I compared two dwellings, one in Ayr and one at New Farm. For the family in Ayr there is one option: the state government owned Ergon Energy, \$1,840 a year. For the family in New Farm there are 216 plans available, the cheapest at \$1,380 a year, a saving of almost \$500 for those people living down here. It eats away the \$575 rebate that this mob will keep talking about and promising. To rub salt into those wounds, they are savings from GloBird Energy who, according to the website, resell for Energex.

I want to talk about insurance because that is the one that is biting in the north. If someone is a motor vehicle owner they can see their insurance premiums going up year on year. They are not just sneaking up; they are doubling and tripling. Why is that? It is because we have a stolen car problem that is absolutely out of control in the north. In Cairns they are on track to reach 1,500 stolen motor vehicles this year. Six cars in Townsville were stolen and burnt in the last month. What does that mean? Let me enlighten those opposite. That means a lot of people out there can no longer afford insurance. When their car gets stolen and burnt, they will be on foot. When families out there lose that vehicle, they do not have any other option. They do not have any other options to get around because we do not have a lot of public transport in the bush, and that is the reality.

If someone owns a four-bedroom home in Townsville they are paying around \$7,000 a year in insurance. I wonder what those opposite are paying at the moment. They should think about that: \$7,000 a year. A pensioner rang me last week and said, 'We can no longer afford that, Dale.' The next disaster in the north will be a disaster of a magnitude we have never seen before. We are going to see home owners who lose their property not have any insurance. If this lot do not realise what that means, they need to get up there. They need to get in their Teslas, drive out to the bush and see what is going on.

(Time expired)