




Speech By
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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Cost of Living

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): The cost of living is crippling Queenslanders and Premier Palaszczuk is bad for their budget. How much more can Queenslanders afford of a government that has checked out of doing anything in the middle of a full-blown cost-of-living crisis? The Premier was asked directly about this on countless occasions today and she only had two defences: (1) it is the previous government's fault; and (2) people have a job. Somehow the fact that people have a job means that the Premier and her government can check out of doing anything about the pressures that are being felt on household budgets across this state. It shows the hubris and arrogance of this government to suggest it is someone else's fault and responsibility.

When a question on another topic was raised the Treasurer said, 'Finally, something that matters.' Why doesn't the cost of living matter? Why doesn't the pressure Queensland families are feeling matter? If you listened to the Premier you could be fooled into believing it has never been better. Tell the worker who will sleep in their car tonight that things have never been better. Tell a working family who has to choose between paying the electricity bill or the home insurance that things have never been better. Tell the young Queenslander who cannot afford their learner's licence that it is the fault of a government that left office when they were in primary school. That is what we hear from this government: it is always someone else's fault; it is never their responsibility. They have checked out on the things that matter to Queenslanders.

May I reflect on the experiences that Queenslanders are telling me and our party as we get around Queensland. They tell us their electricity bills are going up and they are fearful of where they will end. They tell us their insurance bills have risen and are rising to the point where they wonder whether or not they can afford to keep insurance. They tell us that their car rego continues to go up and they wonder whether or not they can keep it on the road. Today we asked a question that was not answered so we are going to ask it again: when will we have cheaper electricity prices? The shadow minister even put a date on it so maybe this government could be held accountable for what the minister has been saying; that is, the government will put downward pressure on electricity prices and it will be cheaper for families.

So far, all we have seen is a project that has no money attached to it, no planning, no consultation with First Nations people, no consultation with the people living there, no KPIs that will be met on the way and no environmental approvals. Today we found out that the minister did not even know about it. Somehow this is going to be the panacea that puts downward pressure on people's electricity prices. We are hearing of businesses that are already getting their renewal notices and their forward pricings, and it is frightening. In the days ahead we will articulate what it means to those hardworking Queenslanders. Twelve months to two years ago when those price rises came through Queenslanders thought that would be the end of the road. It is only the beginning, and the government believes it is someone else's responsibility because they have checked out.

A driver's licence is the key to independence and the key to a job. Just this morning my office was contacted by a Queenslanders who cannot afford to pay for their child's licence. They told me about the impact that is having on their household. A Queensland learner's licence costs more than any other state. Today the shadow minister asked the Premier and the Premier was clueless. The Premier had never even heard of the furore that is burning amongst Queenslanders. This is a hot topic that Queenslanders are talking about and the Premier had never heard of it. The Premier was given a piece of paper, and after saying that she was unaware of it she then said that she would look into it.

Let me help the Premier look into it. In the Northern Territory it costs a young person \$25 to get their learner's; in New South Wales it is \$26; in Victoria it is \$26; in Tasmania it is \$35.29; in the ACT it is \$51.10; in South Australia it is \$69; and in Western Australia, which you would think would be the outlier, it is \$126.10—but no, in Queensland it is \$186.55! That is seven times more expensive than New South Wales and Victoria. That means a learner is seven times less likely to get the keys to a vehicle to go and get an apprenticeship or traineeship. It means they are seven times more unlikely to have the freedom that comes with a vehicle and a licence to go and see friends and families. Boy oh boy, have our teenagers not been through enough in the last couple of years? After becoming aware of the issue today the Premier said she would look into it. There is no need to look further: they are the facts. Do the right thing and square the ledger. Give them a break; they have been through enough. It is time they stopped being treated as the whipping boys and cash cows of this government.

Rising rents are a challenge for thousands of Queenslanders if they are lucky enough to get a home. Today we found out that Brisbane city has seen the steepest annual climb in housing affordability and regional Queensland is the most unaffordable regional area in Australia. This housing crisis is eight years in the making. When the shadow minister attempted to ask a question today about the contrast between spending money on advertising and money on social housing, we could not even get a straight answer. We had to get another history lesson.

At a time when Queenslanders cannot get into a home, at a time when social housing has not even come close to keeping pace with the population, and at a time when \$220 million was spent on a political 'get square' with the federal government for an asset that we will never own, this government refused to answer a question about housing. The Premier said that her government was not responsible for the lack of new housing lots. Whose fault is it that infrastructure has not kept pace with demand and therefore lots have not been opened up? Whose fault is it that social housing has not kept pace with the increased population and demand? Whose fault is it that community housing sectors in other states seem to have been able to deliver more benefits for people than the one here in Queensland? There is only one common theme, and that is a tired third-term government which after eight years has checked out.

The Queensland Audit Office highlighted the consequences for a government that fails to plan, deliver and evaluate. That consequence is being felt tonight at kitchen tables across this great state and it will be felt tomorrow night. The government has promised that this week in parliament they are going to table their response to the housing summit. Many Queenslanders went to the housing summit in good faith. The shadow minister and I went in good faith to hear about the solutions that were put forward. The government said it would take further action, but those Queenslanders sleeping in their car tonight or on a friend's couch are hopeful it will be more successful than what they have seen to date. The government said there were two signature projects. One was emergency housing at Griffith uni. This is a building that is there, it is in place, but it has been many months and still no-one is living in it.

We heard about the granny flat revolution. The government cannot tell us how many granny flats, what approaches have been made, how many people have moved in or what any KPIs are. It was a media announcement and then they walked away. It is never about planning, delivering and evaluating; it is always about the media announcement and how they can get through to the next crisis so they can say they are doing something about it.

In 2015 if an average house in Brisbane was purchased by a first home buyer, they would not have paid one cent in stamp duty. Today that first home buyer would pay over \$20,000 in the middle of a full-blown housing crisis and a cost-of-living crisis. This government has failed to plan, it has failed to deliver and it continues to fail Queenslanders on the cost-of-living crisis they are experiencing.