




Speech By
Hon. Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

Record of Proceedings, 20 March 2024

MOTIONS

Cash, Legal Tender

 **Hon. BJ MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (4.36 pm): I move the following amendment—

That paragraphs 3 and 4 are omitted and the following inserted:

- '3. notes that state government institutions provide an array of payment options and will work with Queenslanders to support their payment needs; and
4. notes that many people in our community use electronic means of payment, however options should be available where possible.'

All Queenslanders should have the choice to use cash. The Department of Transport and Main Roads handles on average 20 million transactions per year on behalf of the government. These transactions are completed right across the state. TMR is committed to ensuring equity in the provision of services; this includes facilitating cash payments. The Queensland government accepts cash at more than 80 Queensland Government Agent Program counters in the regions, 58 customer service centres and three Queensland government service centres. Customers can choose to pay for services—like renewing their vehicle registration or licences—using cash. For example, in the electorate of Traeger, face-to-face government services are offered in Camooweal. This is at one of our Queensland Government Agent Program, QGAP, counters—and, yes, customers have the option to pay by cash.

In the last financial year, I am advised that the top three ways customers completed transactions were online, face to face and BPAY: 7.3 million transactions, or around 35 per cent, were completed online; 4.6 million transactions, or 22 per cent, were completed face to face; and four million transactions, or around 20 per cent, were completed via BPAY. With almost a quarter of transactions still being undertaken face to face, we know that many Queenslanders still like the option to pay by cash. We also recognise that some customers enjoy the accessibility of digital services and choose to pay and access services online. In January 2024 a record 525,000 Queenslanders were authenticated online. That means half a million more Queenslanders are signed up ready to complete their government transactions over the internet.

We know that this is not the best choice for everyone. We understand that access to cash to make a payment is a matter of equity. Not every Queenslander can obtain a credit card or can afford a smartphone, and it is important that this is reflected in the way they can pay for government services or products. On this side of the House we govern for all Queenslanders.

In terms of public transport, we are providing customers with different ways to pay for services, and that is reflected on our public transport network right across the state. You can purchase a paper ticket using cash through a machine, or you can pay and book online, or you can tap your go card or

use your credit card, phone or smartwatch. During COVID-19 a decision was made to go cashless on the SEQ network in order to protect our frontline drivers and customers and their health and physical safety. However, you can still purchase a ticket at any bus or train station using cash. No matter what way customers choose to pay, we support Queenslanders having the right to choose.