




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 7 March 2024

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Gladstone Electorate, Cost of Living

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (2.40 pm): I know cost of living is certainly front of mind for Gladstone residents. It is one of the key issues that people raise with me. In response, we locked in \$8.2 billion in cost-of-living relief in the state budget—the biggest cost-of-living package ever delivered by a government. We are also freezing car registration, public transport fees, delivering free kindy and TAFE, outlawing rent bidding and making bonds portable. We are listening and we are delivering. I know that there is more to do, and we will keep delivering support for all Queenslanders because Labor governments help households to tackle cost-of-living pressures.

It is a bit rich of the LNP to come into this House and suddenly pretend that they care about the cost of living. This is from a party that cut, sacked and sold its way to three years of misery for Queenslanders. Central Queensland was not spared in the LNP cuts. In Gladstone, Calliope, Rockhampton and Yeppoon they cut health workers, Ergon linesmen and TMR officers. The LNP have no shame at all—cutting, sacking and selling in Central Queensland.

They also wanted to sell the Gladstone Ports Corporation and parts of Sunwater in my area. They have cutting, sacking and selling in their DNA and they will not give up if they are ever elected. The member for Broadwater is cut from the same cloth as Campbell Newman. We can invest in local projects in Gladstone because we kept assets like the Gladstone Area Water Board and the Gladstone Ports Corporation in public hands—we own them. We would not have East Shores upgrades, we would not have the Auckland Hill redevelopment or the upgrades to the Lake Awoonga Recreation Area if the LNP were in government in Queensland. I know that the LNP are trying to talk about water prices in Queensland, but all they would do is increase them. In Gladstone, projects like the sewerage main renewal and the Silverdale Reservoir works are helping council keep the rates—

Mr Saunders interjected.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Maryborough and member for Southern Downs, you are both warned under the standing orders.

Mr BUTCHER: Him yelling at me is like being hit with a wet lettuce leaf! These projects are only happening in the Gladstone Regional Council because of our investment in Building our Regions. The Gladstone Area Water Board delivers dividends to the council because we kept those assets in public hands. There would be no dividends under the LNP because those assets would have been sold off as soon as they got in. On this side of the House, we help our councils with their water infrastructure in Queensland, unlike those opposite who would just cut it or privatise it. They said councils—listen to this—were 'sitting on a goldmine' and that was an excuse to cut funding from our great councils here in Queensland, particularly in regional Queensland. The LNP's only plan for cost of living is taking the spotlight off big supermarkets and their big business buddies here in Queensland.

(Time expired)