




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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MOTIONS

Cash, Legal Tender

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (4.44 pm): I rise to support the amendment, although after hearing the *Cash is King Poem!* maybe I am not going to! As with a lot of the Katter party motions and a lot of things they say here, there is definitely merit in the motion. However, I am really proud to be part of a government that believes in equity of payment for all Queenslanders. We know that people in Queensland should have a choice whether or not they are going to pay in cash. It is very evident that there is a rise in electronic payments. It is more convenient for many people. Transactions are easier to keep track of. I saw transactions in Parliament House today where some people paid in cash and some people paid electronically. It is the way of the world now.

As someone who originates from the regions and who represents a regional city, I appreciate the concerns around a cashless society. It is an issue that gets raised with me quite a bit. There are some businesses that demand customers pay them in cash. They are not actually legally allowed to do that but they do it, and it does cause quite a lot of concern in the community.

As I said, we are a government that supports equity. We want equal opportunities for everybody. I think that is reflected, as we heard from Minister Mellish, in our public transport network across the state. That network provides commuters a number of ways to pay. You can get a paper ticket using cash through a machine, you can pay and book online, you can tap your go card or you can use your credit card, your phone or your smartwatch. As we also heard from the minister, during the COVID-19 pandemic there was a decision made to go cashless in that system, and that really was to help stop the spread of the virus and to protect our frontline workers as well as customers. You can still purchase a ticket at any bus or train station using cash. We have a department of transport office in our area. I know that it often handles cash from customers.

I think in lower socio-economic areas there is a higher incidence of people who are still really happy to use cash. When there are emergencies or natural disasters, electronic payment systems can fail or become unavailable, as was outlined in that poem. Accepting cash ensures people can still purchase essential goods and services when digital infrastructure goes down.

It does not matter how you choose to pay; we support Queenslanders having the right to choose how they go about making payments. We understand that using cash for payment is an equity issue. As I said earlier, I think in lower socio-economic areas, as in some parts of my electorate, people still use cash. It is still very important to them.

There are people who resent the banks and the high fees that are often charged. They do not want to use the tap-and-go; they do not want to use electronic means as a way to get their money because of those higher fees. With cost-of-living pressures, people are really conscious of every single dollar that goes out of their hand.

I want to reassure everybody that on this side of the House we govern for all Queenslanders and that choice is incredibly important to us. I would like to support the amendment moved by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and I commend it to the House.