




Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

Record of Proceedings, 20 March 2024

MOTIONS

Cash, Legal Tender

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (4.31 pm): I move—

That this House:

1. notes that cash is legal tender accepted in Queensland;
2. openly supports the rights to use cash as a lawful form of payment throughout Queensland;
3. calls on the state government to take immediate steps to mandate that all state government offices, including all department service centres, and state-owned sports and recreation facilities, must accept cash as a legal method of payment; and
4. condemns any move by local or federal governments to move toward a cashless society.

This is about recognising that it is more than just a binary code and some digital currency that we want. Philosophically, this is where it cuts through. It represents an incremental creep on people's lives and freedoms if we are moving to a digital currency. I need to build into that because it is a really important point. Everyone rolls their eyes and says, 'What is this overreach?' but this is where it all starts. It is that incremental creep where some of those freedoms that we enjoy are offloaded. Cash is very intrinsically linked to that point.

It is a fact that the biggest users of cash are the elderly, those on a low income and those in rural and remote areas, so that is why we feel so strongly about this. We were very much reminded about this during some of the local disasters we suffered in the north this last season. When things go down—or even when our telecommunications are working in normal circumstances—it becomes very difficult for us to trade up there without cash.

I come back to the point about people's trust. The member for Hinchinbrook went over to China a few years ago. They have social credits there and if you play up—if you jaywalk, for example—all of a sudden, bang, money is taken out of your account. It can be an unforgiving system. We move straight down the path of George Orwell's *1984*. That is the extreme example of where this can land if it is not nipped in the bud right now. That is the reason for bringing this in front of everyone now. We could have complacency around this where everyone says, 'It's not even an issue,' but it is happening. Councils have been trying to pass it in North Queensland. Councils have been trying to go cashless. Sporting facilities are doing it now, as are buses. It is happening now and everyone is just watching it happen. It takes governments to be assertive and proactive to stop it.

Who is the big pusher of this? It is the banks. The big four banks made \$32 billion in profit last year. Cash costs them a lot of money and it is an inconvenience for them to shift cash around. That is difficult for them. They are in there with government and they have so much influence over our governments in Australia. We can see how their lovely relationship goes hand in hand there and how much influence they have.

We had the truck strike in Canada where people were standing up for freedoms and the Canadian government said, 'Let's freeze the bank accounts of these people because we don't like their political views and what they're doing. They're being disruptive so let's stop their bank accounts.' That erupted in a furore. They are the sorts of things we are exposed to in a cashless society. We talked about the natural disasters and the telecommunications. In Normanton, mobile phones have been out for eight days at the moment. That does not happen very much in Brisbane or the south-east corner. These are the things we put up with. I go to the remote events that we have that run off cash—like the Sedan Dip and the Quamby races. A lot of these places are getting remote EFTPOS now, but a lot them still run on cash and the people have to run floats to the banks in town.

Let me go back to the banks. Bankwest recently announced that they were going to close all of their 60 branches and go digital. They do not worry about customer convenience or remote communities, race clubs and small businesses. They are keen to get out of this and they need to be stopped. It is not enough to sit back and say that this is the market talking. Let us admit that we are all using less and less cash and that is why it takes a government to stand up and say that they are going to make sure they preserve a place for cash and for people's freedoms.