




Speech By
Hon. Amanda Stoker

MEMBER FOR OODGEROO

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REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. AJ STOKER** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (3.21 pm): I love cutting taxes. That is because lower taxes are good for Queenslanders. You will always use your money more effectively than any well-meaning bureaucracy ever could. Therefore, it is with great pleasure that I rise to support the delivery of the Crisafulli LNP government's promise to scrap two taxes today.

It beggars belief that, in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis, Labor were going to impose a new tax on GP practices, which is a cost that would inevitably be passed on to the consumer, as all taxes are. It is already hard enough for Queenslanders to make ends meet. The last thing they needed was for it to be more expensive to see a doctor when they need one. It is a false economy, too. An abundance of data shows that if people cannot access local, timely and affordable GP services then they end up in the emergency rooms of our hospitals. Ultimately, that is a harm to the patient and also a higher cost for the taxpayer. That simply does not make any sense. In my electorate, 32.4 per cent of my constituents have one or more long-term health conditions, which is higher than the Queensland average. That means it is absolutely vital that we have readily available and strong GP services in our community.

However, this debate has gone very strangely. Labor member after Labor member has stood up, talked about a scare campaign and claimed that there is no such tax. If that were the case then why, after months of claiming that there was no such thing as a patients tax, did Labor have to cave to pressure from the community and offer what they called an amnesty for the new payroll tax burden? Somewhat cheekily, that amnesty would have lasted till just the other side of the election. You can call me cynical, but that demonstrates both that there is a tax and that they were intent on reviving it as soon as they swindled their way into another term in office. Those opposite simply cannot have it both ways. If there is no patients tax then why on earth would we need an amnesty? Instead of listening to those opposite, maybe we should listen to our GPs. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners called this tax illogical. The Australian Medical Association of Queensland said it would be the end of bulk-billing. I can only thank heavens that Queenslanders did not fall for it.

On this side of the chamber we are determined to ensure people in communities such as the Redlands can access quality health services when they need them. GPs are a vital part of the fabric of health services in the Redlands and across Queensland, and we will unashamedly fight for that to continue. We are determined to respect Queenslanders' money. One way to do that is to stand against policies that would increase the cost of living and make life more expensive for households. It beggars belief that, at a time when families are struggling with inflation and the cost of groceries, energy, housing and more, much of which has been driven by the ill-disciplined spending and poor economic management of state and federal Labor governments, Labor were prepared to make it even harder for people to get by.

Of course, that is not the only tax we hope to axe today. This bill abolishes stamp duty on new home builds for first home buyers. Increasing home ownership is a key priority of this government. Under Labor, the dream of home ownership has steadily slipped away as Queensland's home

ownership rates have fallen to the lowest in the country. People used to move to this state because of its robust economy and affordable life which meant that people from all walks of life used to be able to get ahead. Home ownership matters. The difficult task of saving for a deposit and paying a mortgage while you are younger gives us security in old age. It encourages strong and stable families. It encourages people to put down roots and deeply connect to their communities. All the evidence shows that young people still want that. Over 60 per cent of people aged 28 or younger want to own their own home, yet less than half of that group believe that they will ever be able to achieve it.

I see the impact of low home ownership on vulnerable older people in my community. When Caroline told me her story, I could not help but be moved. At the age of 80, steep rent rises forced her to rent out rooms in her townhouse in order to try to cobble together the money to make the payments. She had in her house people she did not know and who, shall we say, lived to very different values to those she lived by day to day. That made her feel unsafe and, using a deadlock, she would lock herself in her bedroom. When she asked her property manager what she could do about the situation, they used it as a trigger to evict her and threaten her with homelessness just before Christmas. In our communities, we need as many people as possible to own their own homes. It prevents the kind of upheaval experienced by people such as Caroline. However, with the rising cost of living and the failure of the previous government to deliver sufficient housing supply, that is harder than ever.

This government is different. We are doing what it takes to stop inflation in the cost of building by restoring order and safety in the construction industry and by reducing the burden of red tape on the industry, which pushes up prices. We are doing the planning work that will lead to land releases in the right places and with the right infrastructure. That matters for a lot of reasons, including the fact that local businesses cannot get staff, not because the talent is not there but because new staff simply cannot find a place to live. It also matters to give hope to young people who aspire to be new homeowners. I support this bill wholeheartedly and I look forward to the Crisafulli LNP government abolishing the burden of stamp duty for those who seek to build their first homes.