




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

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REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (7.44 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. I will start with the changes to the transfer duty threshold. I want to begin by saying, as the shadow treasurer did yesterday, that this Labor opposition will always support attempts to improve housing supply in Queensland. This side of the House fully supports the minor change put forward to the laws surrounding partial renting for first home buyers; however, my concerns reflect those of the experts from the Real Estate Institute of Queensland. It was clear they are concerned that the government has not done any modelling in relation to the actual uptake of the transfer duty threshold concession so we do not know whether it will have the effect that every member in this place wants to see for their constituency—that is, an increased rate of home ownership. It is true that, as we have seen, Queensland Treasury has not done modelling on whether this approach will even work. No-one knows if it is going to move the dial.

The LNP claim that this move will pave the way for thousands of first home buyers to save up-front transaction costs when first buying a new home, but where does this figure come from? Over what time period? The government have not done any modelling on the anticipated increase of home ownership through this measure, so how do they know how many people will benefit from this measure? To drive real change for prospective homebuyers, they need to take a look at where measures like these should be targeted. Removing the threshold completely is not a targeted approach. Removing a transfer duty threshold completely gives tax cuts to everyone, and that includes people who can afford to buy properties worth well over the median price. I did some maths. In my community, Deception Bay, the median price for a four-bedroom home is about \$760,000, so abolishing stamp duty there will save a first home buyer over \$11,000. That is pretty good. That sounds fantastic, but that is until you hear about a first home buyer who will save \$88,000 on a \$2 million house in Hamilton or Paddington. That is eight times the amount that would be saved by a person who is buying a house in Deception Bay.

Government members interjected.

Mr WHITING: I do hear some murmurs, but I want to remind the House that it was Labor that raised the first home owner's threshold. It was Labor that raised the first home owner's vacant land threshold. Before the election the Miles government committed to a post-election review of property tax settings to the Property Council. Did the LNP do the same? Not a chance. This review would have helped the LNP government create a more targeted approach for their policy.

Touching on the payroll tax exemption for general practitioners, I note that, as we have heard, this payroll burden did not exist. Let me point out that it was Queensland Labor that first introduced an amnesty on the GP payroll tax. We were the first in the country and we were thanked by the AMAQ.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): We will have silence, thank you, when the speaker is on his feet.

Mr WHITING: Mr Deputy Speaker, I did listen very intently to the member for Logan. I have a copy of what he tabled. It is headed 'Payroll tax lifeline for Queensland general practice' and it is dated September 2023. It states—

Queensland general practices can breathe a sigh of relief, with the State Government announcing it is bringing an end to the 18-month payroll tax battle.

The RACGP has welcomed the change, which will see normal business arrangements, patient fees including Medicare benefits and out-of-pocket fees, not subject to payroll tax when they are paid directly by a patient to a GP.

The other one, from October last year, states—

Queensland has become the first jurisdiction to permanently exempt GPs from payroll tax.

The announcement has led to widespread celebration among the state's GPs, who have spent years advocating for the exemption.

The Queensland Government's promise, revealed on Wednesday, will exempt GPs from payroll tax, if re-elected ...

The immediate past president said—

This is great news for GPs, but particularly great news for patients who would ultimately have had to absorb the cost and have to pay.

So thank you, Labor. There we go.

It is very clear that the former government led the way on this, as it did, may I note, on the 50-cent fares as well. Labor has always supported exempting GPs from payroll tax, and we delivered that. We were the first in Australia. Thank you, Labor. You're welcome. What is more, it was accounted for in the forecasts. It was put forward in the forecasts. General practitioners were already able to completely avoid being subjected to payroll taxes.

When the member for Logan was speaking, he reminded me of where the GP tax came from in the first place. It was the then health minister Peter Dutton. Remember the \$7 co-payment that they brought forward. Every time a person popped their head in to see the GP, Peter Dutton's hand would be out and he would be saying, 'Give me \$7 for that please.' As the member for Logan said, that was the real GP tax. Add to that what Abbott, Turnbull, Morrison and the rest of them did not do with those Medicare rebates. If we are talking about a particular party that really did want to put a GP tax in, it is those opposite. God help Queensland because they are now in control of our health system.