



## Speech By **Hermann Vorster**

**MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 August 2025

### **ADJOURNMENT**

#### **Burleigh Electorate, Parking Fees**

 **Mr VORSTER** (Burleigh—LNP) (11.46 pm): Behind closed doors and without community consultation, the Gold Coast City council resolved to increase parking fees in Burleigh Heads. They did so at the very worst possible time. At a time when the council should be providing relief to businesses already struggling through the disruption of light rail construction, they instead hammered their customers. The fallout has been significant. Visitors are threatening to boycott Burleigh, taking with them the spending that sustains local jobs and supports our vibrant village atmosphere.

It is not just the increase in charges up to 50 per cent; council has also extended regulated hours. What was once nine to five is now 7 am to 7 pm—a shameless cash grab, a direct tax on our coastal lifestyle. Council has put a price on a morning surf and a walk along the beach. Very few things in this life are free, but they have seen fit to snatch even these simple joys from locals. The consequences of these changes are real and the community is speaking up.

I thank Reverend Ralph Mayhew from Burleigh Village Church for speaking up for his elderly parishioners. I acknowledge the parishioners of Infant Saviour Catholic Church. There, the 80 to 100 parishioners at the 7 am Sunday mass are being slugged a fee to park. I raise these examples to refute denials made in council chambers yesterday, denials that these church services were even occurring. Those denials diminish the voices of locals, the vulnerable and the faith community. I say: these people matter and local businesses matter. They count. They deserve to be consulted before council makes decisions that upend their lives.

There is hope. Working together with locals like Linda Robson, Kellie Shotton and Sarah-Jane Green, I launched a petition to demand a review with consultation and propose a simple '30 minutes free' parking model to bring back the locals. I thank Councillor Josh Martin and Councillor Dan Doran, who opposed these changes from the very start and who have supported the tabling of the petition. I extend an olive branch to those councillors who voted for those changes, dismissed the petition or declared that there would be no change before the petition was even tabled. They now have an opportunity to stop, to rethink and to do the right thing.

I acknowledge that changing one's mind is never easy, but they can do so knowing their communities will have their backs, despite any pressure they may feel. Constituents will respect councillors who listen, who admit when a mistake has been made and who put people before revenue. This lifestyle tax should never have gone through. Burleigh deserves better, and let's hope compassion and common sense prevail. They say local government is closest to the people. The people are speaking and it is time to listen.