



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Tuesday, 15 November 2011

MOTION: COST OF LIVING

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (6.17 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the shadow minister for transport, the member for Indooroopilly. As the shadow minister for regional Queensland, I rise to say a few words on behalf of Queenslanders in rural and regional Queensland. It is appropriate that the shadow minister for transport moved the motion because it is in the area of transport costs that families and businesses in regional and rural Queensland have arguably suffered the most under this Labor government. Was it not interesting that the Minister for Transport, who moved the government's amendment, failed to mention in her contribution one single issue in relation to the cost of living as it relates to transport for rural and regional Queenslanders?

In the first instance, because families and businesses in regional Queensland rely more on their own private vehicles or business vehicles, in many instances due to the absence of alternatives such as public transport services, they have been more heavily disadvantaged by one of the Bligh Labor government's more disgraceful deceptions of the people of Queensland; that is, the removal of the fuel tax rebate. In the absence of Citytrain services, CityCat services and the extensive bus services in Brisbane and in our other major provincial cities, rural and regional families drive their cars more. When they drive more, they fill up more. When they fill up more, they pay more fuel tax which, until the Bligh Labor government betrayed them, they were not burdened with. Labor's celebrated go card will not do Queensland families in regional and rural areas much good when they are filling up in Cooktown, Cloncurry, Greenvale, Emerald or Dirranbandi. The track record of this Labor government in relation to transport costs is appalling.

All the way back in 2007, it was this Labor government that increased stamp duty on the sale of motor vehicles. The policy adopted by Labor once again targeted rural and regional Queenslanders, particularly heavy vehicle road transport vehicles, which are the lifeblood of regional Queensland. At that time, stamp duty on a four-cylinder vehicle increased by 50 per cent. But for six-cylinder vehicles, stamp duty increased by 75 per cent and stamp duty on eight-cylinder or more vehicles increased by 100 per cent. So the higher the capacity of a vehicle, such as four-wheel drives or utilities with six or eight cylinders—vehicles that people in rural and regional Queensland rely on because of where they live or the work that they are employed in—the more they copped it in the neck under this Bligh Labor government.

It was also interesting to note that the increase in stamp duty targeted people who were not wealthy. Families with a couple of kids who needed to own a decent sized car like a Falcon or a Commodore—a larger type of vehicle with six cylinders that would accommodate a couple of kids—but were not in the market for a new vehicle still copped the 75 per cent stamp duty increase if they purchased a second-hand vehicle. Yet this government claims to be concerned about the battlers, like the Minister for Community Services claimed. But the facts in this case have exposed her rhetoric on cost-of-living issues.

In the area of transport, you can continue to make the point—such has been the consistent and the relentless extraction of more and more revenue from Queenslanders—when you look at significant hikes in motor vehicle registration and drivers' licences. It is worth making the point again that in respect of hikes in motor vehicle registration rural and regional Queenslanders lose out more because, on average, they need to use six-cylinder or eight-cylinder vehicles, which attract higher registration costs, and they depend on them more every day of their life.

I turn now to skyrocketing costs of utilities across Queensland. I recognise that they impact on families and businesses across the state, but again they impact more on rural and regional Queenslanders. In North Queensland, where I come from, our hot tropical summers mean that families rely more heavily on services like air conditioning and businesses rely more heavily on refrigerated transport. They are really struggling with the skyrocketing costs of electricity prices. In southern Queensland, where the winters are more severe, the problem is reversed but no less challenging. I have heard my friend the member for Toowoomba South speak on more than one occasion in this place about the massive increases in the cost of gas and how pensioners in his electorate struggle to meet the cost of staying warm when those bitter westerlies blow in in the Garden City on the hill.

Finally, I cannot let this opportunity go by without mentioning the significant increases in the cost of environmental compliance for agricultural industries in regional Queensland. The various blow-outs in permits and licences required to operate a farm business are too numerous to list here tonight, but I have done that regularly and on more than one occasion in this place in the past. The big problem with Labor is that they just do not get it. They continue to implement more taxes—most recently in Queensland the waste tax and at the federal level the carbon tax.

(Time expired)