



Speech By
Mark Robinson

MEMBER FOR OODGEROO

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MOTION

Water Prices

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (5.19 pm): I contend that Labor's water pricing policies are a form of water torture for the residents and small businesses of Redland City and South-East Queensland. Tonight I call on the three Redland City Labor MPs, the members for Capalaba, Redlands and Springwood, to vote for our motion—to vote for cheaper water for their electorates and not for more expensive water. It has been interesting following the contribution of the member for Redlands, who said nothing in representing the people of Redlands apart from agreeing to higher prices for the people of the Redlands but put forward some general argument for the whole of the south-east.

I support the motion moved by the LNP opposition that this House calls on the Palaszczuk Labor government to rule out the QCA's recommendation to charge more for water. Redland City residents are deeply concerned about Labor's pending water price hike. I continue to hear from local residents, consumers and businesses that they are worried about the cost blowouts under Labor, whether for power, water, petrol, car registration, boat registration, public transport and many other areas. For many, the cost of living and the cost of doing business is becoming unsustainable. Under Labor, the South-East Queensland bulk water price will increase by nine per cent, or \$88, for Redlands residents. This price hike makes our water increases the largest in South-East Queensland.

Our water used to be cheap. The former Redland shire council had the foresight to plan, secure and construct the necessary water infrastructure and valuable water resources and to keep water price increases low. As I have said in this House a number of times, the once cheap local Redlands water is now very expensive. The water now does a circuit around Labor's South-East Queensland water network and comes back dramatically more expensive as state bulk water. When Labor seized control of Redlands water it failed to tell local residents and businesses how very expensive that decision would be. Today local businesses and residents are worried.

I recently told the story of one local Cleveland business as representative of the grim situation facing all businesses in Redlands. Pierre's cafe is a local Cleveland business in Middle Street owned and operated by Sharon Milne. Sharon was so angry about the water price rises and the impacts of Labor policy on her business that she was prepared to speak out about it on ABC TV news. As I have mentioned previously in the House, after seeing the story on the news I met with Sharon for the first time and she told me that the water price rise will impact her business negatively and it will be placed under unnecessary pressure.

She was concerned about increased costs to run the cafe, increased power costs and now increased water bills. She was concerned about some of her customers who are already feeling the pressure of increased costs of living. She went on to say that these costs have to be paid for in some way and asked what small businesses like hers are supposed to do to make ends meet. Sharon suggested that Labor's water price rises would put pressure on the cost of their goods and services and upon staffing levels. Would she pass costs on to customers if at all possible though not desirable and/or

would she be able to keep her staff in the same levels of employment? Unlike Labor, small businesses have to balance the books and live within their means. The local businesses of Redland City and South-East Queensland cannot afford the next two years of this Labor government and certainly cannot afford a federal Shorten Labor government.

Under the LNP government the costs of living and doing business were lower, small business growth and job creation were up and unnecessary compliance measures, red tape and green tape were reduced. The LNP reduced pressure on state taxes, levies, charges and fees, unlike Labor, which is imposing five announced taxes and we know that there will be more to come.

Then there is the issue of not only the expense of the water but also the dangerous practice around the downgrading of the local Leslie Harrison Dam and also overdrawing on the aquifer of North Stradbroke Island, which could have impacts on the ecology of the island and the environment. The LNP protected the island with its water policies.

Labor's higher water prices mean my local residents and small businesses are out of pocket. The costs of goods and services will be under pressure to rise and jobs will be put at risk. It is time for this Labor government to stop torturing the residents and small businesses of Redland City and treating them as cash cows. I support the original motion.