



Gavin Pearce MP
Federal Member for Braddon

Editorial

25 March 2024

Our region deserves more than a throw-away line

If there was an award for the most over-used phrase this year, “cost-of-living crisis” would be a hot contender. It’s been bandied around by politicians pointing the finger at everyone else and taking giant steps backwards rather than claiming responsibility.

What I’m hearing on the ground every single day is that people are sick and tired of being used as a throw-away line by a government that has no understanding of their struggles – struggles of real people, in real communities, right here across the North-West, West Coast and King Island.

A line the Federal Labor Treasurer Jim Chalmers loves to roll out is: “We know cost-of-living pressures are hurting many households and we’re acting to ease the pressure on everyday essentials for middle Australia.”

I accept the first part of the statement but completely reject the second part. In our region, Labor’s efforts are ineffective at best.

Labor has provided electricity bill rebates of \$250 over the next two years to eligible low-income earners. If you’re eligible to get the rebate, it won’t make a dent on your electricity bill that has risen by an average of 9.51%. Many will receive no support at all.

Then there’s Labor’s promise to make childcare cheaper. That’s of little consequence when you can’t even get your child into care. And if you are lucky enough to secure a place, the subsidy has been more than swallowed up by rising fees as centres also battle with the rising cost of everything.

Labor’s latest commitment is to give 45,000 taxpayers across the North-West, West Coast and King Island a tax cut from July 1. If you earn around \$50,000, you’ll get around \$15 extra a week under Labor’s plan. Real wages have gone backwards 6%, there have been 12 interest rate increases under this Labor government, food has gone up by 8.2 per cent, rent by 10.4 per cent, insurance premiums 17.3 per cent and yet this Labor government believe they should be congratulated for giving the most vulnerable in our region \$15 a week in four months’ time.

We aren’t a bunch of whingers and we’re doing it tough. We need the government to find meaningful solutions. Dismissive, smooth one-liners just don’t cut it.