

24 June 2008

APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 1) 2008-2009

Consideration in Detail

Mr BRADBURY (Lindsay) (5.56 p.m.) — I would like to ask the Assistant Treasurer, through you, Mr Deputy Speaker, a question in relation to taxation policy, which is an area of interest to me in particular. Throughout the course of the election campaign, I know the government—then opposition—made a number of election commitments, but in the course of campaigning throughout my electorate one of the key concerns that people raised with me was the need to improve our taxation system at a number of levels. I think one of the primary concerns is to ensure that we have a fairer system of taxation. The principal concern that people raised in relation to fairness is to ensure that everybody is paying their fair share of tax and that the system has an array of integrity measures in place that ensure that tax is being levied equitably across the board. I would like to ask the Assistant Treasurer to comment on that.

But also the other aspect of what people raised with me is the question of international competitiveness. I know that taxation policy is a key indicator of the international competitiveness of any given economy and there is always a range of measures within the taxation system that can be looked at that will allow us to compare ourselves either favourably or not to other nations on an internationally competitive scorecard.

I would ask that the Assistant Treasurer direct his comments to both questions of fairness, particularly in relation to low- and middle-income earners, and I know that they are the overwhelming majority of taxpayers in my electorate. For a long time they have seen a skewing of where the benefits of taxation policy and tax cuts have been delivered to higher income earners. They are very much concerned that the taxation system—

Interjection

Mr Pyne—That's rubbish! You don't seriously believe that. You're only saying that to impress the minister.

Interjection

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper)—Order! There are too many interjections.

Continue

Mr BRADBURY—They are very concerned that taxation policy under the former government had delivered benefits—

Interjection

Mr Pyne interjecting—

Interjection

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Sturt will remain silent or I will deal with him.

Interjection

Mr Pyne interjecting—

Interjection

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Sturt will not defy the chair and will remain silent. Otherwise, it will be necessary for me to deal with him.

Continue

Mr BRADBURY—In relation to low-income earners in particular, I note that the government has proceeded to implement the low-income tax offset, a policy that I think is long overdue. I think that policy in particular not only will benefit low-income earners in my electorate but will also assist those second partners in families in my electorate. Many of them are being forced back into the workforce as a result of the rising cost of living and the increase that they are facing through increased interest rates. So I ask the Assistant Treasurer to outline what measures not only deliver on election commitments that were made before the last election but also deliver real benefits in terms of the particular areas of interest that I have outlined, directing benefits to low-income earners and also ensuring that our tax system is internationally competitive.

you.