



Senator Jane Hume.

MPs U-turn on prescription fees

SUE DUNLEVY

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Financial Services Minister Jane Hume and Assistant Treasurer Michael Sukkar spilled the beans in speeches to parliament on Wednesday.

In her speech introducing

the budget bills into the Senate, Senator Hume announced that the federal government would "reduce the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme general patient charge by \$10, from the current amount of \$42.50 to the new amount of \$32.50 commencing on 1 May 2022".

"This means that over 3 million Australians will pay less for their medicines each year, with close to 17 million scripts

costing patients less," Hansard records her telling the Senate.

This measure was, in fact, not included in the budget and the Advertiser has been told she was mistakenly reading an out-of-date speech.

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Courier Mail
Friday 1/4/2022
Page: 4
Section: General News
Region: Brisbane Circulation: 291,000
Type: Capital City Daily
Size: 155.00 sq.cms.
Frequency: MTWTFSS-

Brief: DPLAUTO2



Ministers spruiked cancelled measures

EXCLUSIVE
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"This means that over 3 million Australians will pay less for their medicines each year, with close to 17 million scripts costing patients less," the speech tabled in the Senate said.

This measure was, in fact, not included in the budget and The Courier-Mail has been told she was mistakenly reading an out-of-date speech.

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However, he was quicker to realise his mistake and had Hansard altered.

Senator Hume's spokesman said: "The information provided in the initial Hansard relating to the reading of the Treasury Law Amendment (Cost of Living Support Other Measures) Bill

2022 was not correct and has since been corrected."

Mr Sukkar did not respond to requests for comment.

It is unlikely the speeches will mean the \$10 cut accidentally becomes law.

Shadow Treasurer Jim Chalmers said: "The budget's only two days old and already its credibility is completely shot.

"The wheels have well and truly fallen off this decade-old government. If Australians can't even trust the government to announce the budget correctly, how on earth can they trust it to deliver what they promise?"

The government did lower by 12 the number of scripts people need to pay for before the safety net kicks in, lowering their price.