




Speech By
Mark Boothman

MEMBER FOR THEODORE

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DEBT REDUCTION AND SAVINGS BILL

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (3.03 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021. I have been listening with intent to the debate so far. I must say, I find it incredible that we put a bill together to save around \$3 million. We have spent almost three days debating a way to save \$3 million. Surely we could save a lot more than the \$3 million this bill talks about.

I refer to page 8 of the committee report, where those opposite continue to talk about privatisation. I know they find it very, very difficult to grasp that back in 2009 the once revered premier Anna Bligh went to an election not talking about asset sales, not talking about anything like that whatsoever, yet six weeks later proposed selling Queensland assets.

Mr KRAUSE: Queensland Rail not for sale.

Mr BOOTHMAN: I take that interjection. I remember back in 2012 when the member for Ipswich West used to love to say 'Rachel the Rail Wrecker'. Let's examine a bit of history for those opposite. I know it is very troubling to understand and I know they probably need a bit of counselling. It is something they do not want to remember, but it is something they need to grasp. Let's go back to one of their favourite newspapers, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which stated on 2 June 1999—

Bligh govt to sell five state assets

Premier Anna Bligh announced on Tuesday that Queensland Motorways Limited—

which they like talking about over there—

the Port of Brisbane, Forest Plantations Queensland (FPQ), Queensland Rail's (QR) coal freight business and the Abbot Point Coal Terminal would be put up for sale.

If you listen to those opposite, they make no reference to selling anything. They are innocent of it all. But they have to take responsibility, because in this chamber today there are members opposite who sat around that cabinet table, and those members would have had a fair bit to say when it came to asset sales. As I refer to the report, the interesting thing about privatisation is those members who were in the Bligh government. The Bligh government's attorney-general at the time was none other than the current Treasurer, Cameron Dick. The Bligh government's minister for infrastructure and planning is the current minister for—well, it is Stirling Hinchliffe.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Member, I ask you to refer to members by their correct titles.

Mr BOOTHMAN: I apologise, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Bligh minister for transport was none other than Annastacia Palaszczuk, the current Premier of this state. We also have the member for Bulimba, the member for McConnel, the member for Morayfield and the member for Mulgrave, who were not around the cabinet table at that time.

We are talking about debt reduction here. If we think about it, in my electorate residents are concerned about issues that affect them. When we talk about debt reduction, sometimes when we fix issues in electorates when they should have been fixed in the first place it costs far less than it costs now, because those issues escalate. In my case, in the electorate of Theodore we have a riverbank that is potentially going to sever a connection road. If they fixed the John Muntz riverbank at the pony club fields when they should have, it would have cost around \$2 million. We are looking at four times that amount now because we have had wet season after wet season where the riverbank has continued to erode away.

They talk about debt reduction, but now those opposite have blown out the cost of fixing a problem that should have been fixed back in 2017. It would have saved Queensland taxpayers a fortune. When it comes down do it, that road is one of the busiest thoroughfares to Mount Tamborine. When we talk about tourism in this place and we talk about saving jobs, Mount Tamborine is a tourism mecca for the Gold Coast hinterland. When you talk about debt reduction, you are talking about getting funds into state coffers. If you do not have strong business you do not have those funds going in; therefore, if that connection road washes away again it will destroy so many businesses up in Mount Tamborine.

Ms Leahy: Which it will.

Mr BOOTHMAN: I take that interjection. It will again. Spending the money when the issue first arose would have saved the taxpayers in the long run.

It is the same with exit 57 in the Oxenford and Helensvale area. Recently, the state government spent \$25 million on it when we know it is a bandaid solution. Going forward, we are going to have to spend a lot more money on it. Why spend \$25 million when we are going to have to do it again? We are talking about debt reduction here. If we spend the money that is required now, we do not need to spend it in the future—

Ms Leahy: Make a saving in the future.

Mr BOOTHMAN: And therefore we make a saving—I take that interjection.

Mr McDonald: It is sensible.

Mr BOOTHMAN: It is sensible economics, and governments need to stop wasting money. The problem with that interchange is that they have spent \$25 million and it is confusing residents. We have regular accidents there. Residents know that there needs to be flyovers. We need to work with the federal government on this issue. I have written to the minister about this and I have asked questions on notice because in the long run we would be saving money because we would not be wasting money on bandaid fixes.

Mr Krause: But who sold the assets?

Mr BOOTHMAN: I take the interjection and I will get to that in a minute. That issue with exit 57 could be solved with flyovers to get traffic away from that intersection. In the long run, it would save money for the Queensland taxpayer if we did it right the first time.

When it comes to the asset sales in this state, those opposite have to accept the fact that their former premier of this state, Anna Bligh, sold so many assets in her tenure, as did Peter Beattie prior to her. They need to accept that fact. Going forward, they need to accept that fact. We have a good doctor over here in the member for Moggill, and I am sure he could refer them to a good psychologist so they can come out and accept this issue.

Mr McDonald: Accept the truth.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Accept the truth. I have sat in this chamber over the last 2½ days and listened to those opposite who cannot accept that when it comes to privatisation they sold the majority of assets out there.

Mr McDonald: Who sold the assets?

Mr BOOTHMAN: Labor sold the assets. Accept it. Learn from your mistakes and accept it. I will finish with these comments. Residents want meaningful debt reduction and they want the government to do what they really set out to do. We have spent two days wasting the time of this chamber with this bill. It is the only bill on the *Notice Paper* that we can actually debate today, and that is very disappointing. I will keep my contribution to that. This has been a torturous period in Queensland history. They cannot accept that they sold the assets.

Mr Krause: Who sold the assets?

Mr BOOTHMAN: Labor sold the assets.