



Speech by

HOWARD HOBBS

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Hansard 7 March 2002

STATE GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (6.46 p.m.): This government is interested only in self-serving publicity and meaningless slogans. We have show pony Pete and the propaganda machine. We saw an ad in yesterday's *Courier-Mail* thanking people for the success of CHOGM, yet most of the attendees have already gone home. He had a ghost audience. Many of the hits on the web site probably came from public servants in the departments. The Premier should not forget that web site hits do not translate into money spent.

The Smart State! The government will not even put airconditioners into western schools. The kids are getting bleeding noses and some classrooms cannot be used and have been closed down because there is no airconditioning. The Premier wants students to spend longer at school, and I agree that that has some merit. However, the government must provide appropriate facilities. At present all that would achieve is putting four- and five-year-old kids into school buses for an extra 10 hours a week, and then they would have to sit in hot classrooms all day. That is crazy. How smart is that? What do the people who raise money for school airconditioning think when the Premier cannot provide them with any money and yet he can find \$100,000 for promotions in the *Courier-Mail*. How smart is that?

I personally welcome the lifting of the school leaving age, but I believe the government is more interested in stopping them from officially registering as unemployed so that it can go to the next election and claim that it has reduced youth unemployment from its gold medal performance of 30 per cent at a time when Australia's economy is performing well based on world standards.

The government claims that it has better general employment figures than when we were in government. That is a further stunt, as everyone knows that unemployment in the past was higher all over Australia. This state is still coming dead last. This is another stunt. Everyone knows that. The government's self-serving publicity 'earning or learning' in relation to education promotes the government's keen interest in education. However, at the same time it is lifting school enrolment levels from 26 to 28 in order for a school to qualify for two teachers. Therefore, smaller two-teacher schools will have only one teacher. How smart is that? P&Cs have to upgrade their school's power supply if they want airconditioning. How smart is that?

Mr English: It saves schools burning down.

Mr HOBBS: But the government should pay for it. Those kids have to have decent facilities.

Virgin Blue is a good example. The Premier spent \$12 million on that airline and helped with Ansett's demise. Now he has to pay another \$5,000 per employee. How smart is that? Talk about hypocrisy! 'Jobs, jobs, jobs,' the Premier says. Where are the jobs in the departments?

What about the Environmental Protection Agency or the DPI? It is hard to find anybody out there, and the people who are left out there are working themselves to a frazzle. They just cannot do the work. What about the Department of Natural Resources and Mines? We have just seen huge increases in land valuations because the department does not have the people on the ground to do the necessary valuations. The system has fallen over. It has collapsed. What about Queensland Health? We have constituents who are waiting 12 months to see a dentist. How smart is that? Are we a Smart State or are we not?

The Premier talked about the various companies that have come to Queensland. Most of them were on the drawing board for years. All he had to do was sit back and wait and negotiate with them.

The government has underspent on capital works. A while ago the Treasurer said that was incorrect. But the reality is that underspending on capital works is 3.2 per cent. For the first time in 13 years we have seen a cut to capital works. How smart is that? And this year it is going to be cut again. We also have the Smart State numberplates. We have heard about them from a few members. Only public servants have been told that they have to use them.

The government cannot tackle the hard issues. It is into stunt politics. Talk about accountability in the parliament! Ministers take up a lot of time making ministerial statements. We could not do that when we were in government. We had to stop at 10 past 11, when we allowed opposition members to make two-minute speeches which gave them the opportunity to have a reasonable say. That does not happen any more. Where is the accountability? Yet the Premier talks about this being the Smart State. As well, a cruel hoax has been played on the sugar industry. For instance, a \$10 million scheme was proposed, but funding of only \$60,000 was approved.

Mr Johnson: Another stunt.

Mr HOBBS: Another stunt. All we have are stunts and more stunts. The Premier's motion refers to successfully promoting Breaking the Unemployment Cycle. He certainly promoted it, all right!

Time expired.
