



Speech by

Lawrence Springborg

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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STATE BUDGET

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.25 a.m.): In recent times we have heard from the Treasurer that there will be no new taxes and charges in this year's state budget. I cast my mind back to the last time that we heard that. The last time we heard that was in the lead-up to the 2001 state election. Lo and behold, what happened afterwards? The government introduced a brand new ambulance tax in Queensland. I say to the people of Queensland, 'Be wary of this government. Be wary of this Treasurer, who makes promises of no new taxes and charges.'

What was the basis of the introduction of the ambulance tax in Queensland? The basis was that we had an unfunded Ambulance Service and that we needed to put more money into it. The Minister for Emergency Services just stood up in this place and admitted that in recent times there has been an increase of 7,000 call-outs to urgent cases.

So what would we expect the government to do in that case? We would expect it to put more money into the Queensland Ambulance Service. We would expect that the government would fund new and replacement ambulance vehicles. But it is not. Let us look at the figures. The Treasurer said the other day that, because of the ambulance tax, we will be able to spend \$9.9 million on new and replacement ambulance vehicles this year. What did it spend last year? It spent \$9.9 million. That was prior to the ambulance tax. What did it spend in 2001-02 when there was no ambulance tax? It spent \$10.5 million. What did it spend in 1998-99? It spent \$9.6 million. What did it spend in 1996-97? It spent \$9.2 million. The population is increasing, the call-outs are increasing, the call-out times and the response times are getting worse. What is this minister doing? He is spending less money on new and replacement ambulance vehicles and collecting more and more from the state's ambulance tax.

Time expired.