



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

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MOTION: QUEENSLAND ECONOMY

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (6.04 pm): We have just heard the blackmail that the Labor Party is going to use on the people of Queensland to try to justify whacking up taxes and selling Queenslanders' assets. This government has no mandate to sell off the assets of Queenslanders. It has no mandate to whack its pensioners with a higher fuel tax. It has no mandate to whack Queenslanders in the far parts of the state with higher costs of living. It has no mandate to come into this parliament to try to justify this weak excuse for selling off the assets of Queensland. It is an absolute disgrace that after 150 years of this state we should go back 150 years to being in a position of almost bankruptcy.

This government does not come true with the people of Queensland. But it even ambushed its own backbench. It even ambushed its own transport minister as to the true state of the books and what it intended to do. Just this week we have heard how the transport minister claimed that she did not know that large slabs of her portfolio were going to be flogged off in the marketplace.

Is it any wonder that Queenslanders feel betrayed? Obviously the backbenchers of the Labor Party—not the ones who have been yapping during the debate—feel betrayed, because they were not told the truth about the intentions of their Premier and their Treasurer. This is a secret plan that they intended to sneak out after the election. If the Premier truly wants to claim that this was a necessary plan, then why did she not tell the people of Queensland before the election? Does she not trust Queenslanders? Does she think they are a pack of fools who do not deserve to know the truth about the future of Queensland? That is the way she is treating them. They had a right to know what the plans were before this ambush in parliament this week. Meanwhile, the backbench of the Labor Party and some of those members who have spoken are obviously willing to go along with this government's plan while they are selling their own pensioners down the river.

Let us look at not only today's financial situation but also the future for Queenslanders. Previous governments that held the reins of power understood that infrastructure could be delivered without having to have this massive sell-off of other infrastructure. But now we see a record proposal for the assets of Queensland to be ditched into the marketplace. We see a record number of assets to be sold at a time when they will give only a very small return to the government.

The government needs to take leadership in investing in economic infrastructure, not flogging it off. We have heard an excuse from the Premier that she does not believe that government has a role in investing in economic infrastructure. She clearly does not understand the history of Queensland. The reason we had the income streams from the economic-producing infrastructure was that government led the way. There are many projects that continue to need the involvement of the government, not a backtracking and a removal from the marketplace. I can think of many such projects within the infrastructure portfolio, particularly within Queensland Rail. Perhaps the Premier would like to explain whether there is going to be investment and the necessary upgrades of that infrastructure, particularly between Brisbane and North Queensland. Is there going to be investment to allow the trains to move into the future and carry the freight that we require? Or is the Premier saying that only the private sector can drive that process?

The truth is that government must take the lead. The government must make sure that this state has a plan not just for today but for the future. For the Premier to say that this Labor government is only going to invest in social infrastructure is a betrayal of the necessary economic basis for the jobs of young Queenslanders in the future.

We have seen a government that now claims it has a plan. When it had no plan to deal with issues in the good times, how on earth could it deal with issues in the bad times? The government racked up a \$64 billion debt with no repayment plan in the good times. Now, when things are looking tough, the government's idea is to sell off the ability to dig our way out of this hole into the future.

The \$800 million blow-out on the water pipeline and the \$1 billion blow-out on the Ipswich Motorway is just an indication that, when it comes to building the necessary infrastructure of the state, this government did not know how to do it in a cost effective way. Now it wants to sell off the economic infrastructure—the key and critical transport infrastructure that is necessary for the jobs and development of Queensland.

This Premier has no plan. She has no mandate. She has betrayed the people of Queensland. She has betrayed her own transport minister and the backbench in this place. But they seem willing to forgive what Queenslanders should never forgive.

(Time expired)