



Speech by

Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Hansard Wednesday, 7 October 2009

MOTION: PENSIONERS, PUBLIC HOUSING RENTS

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (6.14 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. There is an old saying that there are two things in life that are guaranteed: death and taxes. In this state there are three things that are guaranteed: death, taxes and an old unchanged Labor Party that can never change. I ask members how could a cash-strapped state government such as Queensland, which is already selling off its assets to pay the bills, manage without taking \$7.50 each week from its publicly housed pensioners? Here are some suggestions: firstly, not paying the former Reserve Bank Governor Bernie Fraser \$2,500 a day to sell the Bligh government's privatisation plan; secondly, what if we wiped out the \$38 million in salaries it pays to 640 spin doctors; and, thirdly, what if we cut the \$65 million it spends annually in government advertising?

In terms of public housing, which speaks to the heart of our motion, in my electorate alone there are 620 individuals and families registered for long-term social housing. In the minister's own words in answer to a question on notice, of those 68 are very high need, 200 are high need, 325 are moderate need and 27 are lower need. Of all 380 social housing dwellings owned by the department in my electorate I ask: how many are available? What are the chances for the 620 desperate families seeking a roof over their heads? I tell my colleagues, and it pains me to do so, that there are just three vacant homes, due to the general maintenance and turnaround times, which of course will then be made available.

With seniors, particularly single seniors, taking up a fair portion of available public housing, the increase in rent would generate significant revenue for the government. Will they use this money to build social housing? We do not know. This brings me back to something I raised in this House some time ago and that is: what is the DNA of the Labor Party? For those members who cannot remember or have chosen to forget, 'D' is for debt, 'N' is for negligence and 'A' is for arrogance.

Let us talk about debt. Through the 1990s this state had a balance sheet that was the envy of all other state treasurers in Australia. The rot began when then Treasurer Bligh began borrowing far beyond what was required and losing complete control of expenditure. Now we have this Treasurer, the member for Mount Coot-tha—the man the polls suggest is the most unpopular member of this House, the man responsible for delivering \$85.5 billion in deficit that will see a staggering \$14 million per day just in interest payments for each Queenslander. The socialist lie is well and truly at work here—that is, you get better services but you have to pay higher taxes.

Mr SPEAKER: The expression 'lie' is unparliamentary. You will withdraw it immediately.

Mr BLEIJIE: Withdrawn, Mr Speaker. The global financial crisis is to blame, it says, even though this government managed to rack up \$64 billion in debt before the letters GFC actually meant something other than the Geelong Football Club. This government gives with one hand and takes more with the other. I never thought I would see the day that the federal socialists give with one hand and the state bolsheviks take with the other. The pensioners of this country are always the ones that seem to suffer the most. The federal government needs to show with a firm hand the priority it puts on the needs of pensioners.

To reiterate the sentiments of the federal Treasurer, stop pickpocketing the pensioners of Queensland. Queensland pensioners should get a fair go. They should not have every last cent squeezed

out of them. The government should stand up for the pensioners of this state and support the LNP motion that vetoes this heartless rent hike for struggling Queensland pensioners.

I am known in this place for at times belting out the odd tune. I will not entertain the House with one today, but I do often wonder, in the event that the Labor Party had the same flair as I do, what it would sing about. Let me set the scene. We are sitting in the caucus and the rent increase is being discussed. The members of the backbench are quite hesitant and reluctant to go with this policy. I can see the arrogance of the Premier and the Treasurer as they sing to comrades, 'We'll knock 'em down but they'll get up again, we're never going to keep them down.' People are continually being knocked down by this government; they have already been knocked down to a point of no return. The LNP care. I say to Queensland pensioners that they have been continually knocked down by this Labor government, but we on this side will not knock them down; we will pick them up again. We oppose any move by this incompetent, uncaring government to use the recent changes in the pension to increase rents. The government should be ashamed of—

(Time expired)