



Speech by

John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard Wednesday, 5 August 2009

APPROPRIATION BILLS: ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.39 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak to report No. 2 of Estimates Committee A. This is a follow-on from the first part of the parliamentary section of that estimates committee. I again want to thank the parliamentary staff and the honourable member for Yeerongpilly, who was the chairman.

The committee spoke about many financial matters. The principles are that in 2001 Standard & Poor's confirmed that Queensland had the strongest balance sheet of any Australian state. Our net financial liabilities going forward head towards \$100 billion, which the Premier mentioned when we talked about the fact that there is \$85 billion worth of debt. The Premier is saying that we may forego a little over \$12 billion of that debt over a five-year period allowing for the asset sales. Clearly these are things that the people of Queensland were not forewarned about and feel extremely angry about.

We know that 86 per cent of Queenslanders are against these asset sales. The Premier did say that she does not expect we will ever see that \$85 billion eventuate. I am concerned that the Premier thinks that measuring the money thrown at a problem is evidence of her claim that problems are being fixed. I am concerned that the Labor government is set to ensure that an ever-increasing level of budget deficit will lead to higher debt and liabilities that will take decades to overcome.

It is interesting that, since Lehman Brothers collapsed in September 2008, everyone has started referring to the global financial crisis, but these budget papers results showed that in June 2007-08 the Labor government had delivered a \$1.5 billion general government budget deficit, showing that they went broke in a boom. These are the sorts of things that were exposed in our committee.

I had some questions about lobbyists at one stage, at page 31 of our debate, and the lobbyists register, which I notice has come up today for debate. Today in question time we heard members opposite criticising some people associated with the Brisbane City Council. I want to mention that Andrew Brown, who was mentioned this morning, is on the TransApex advisory board, which oversees the tunnel projects and the HSL. It is an advisory board and has no role in procurement. Another person who was mentioned today was Gary Spence, who is on the Brisbane CityWorks Advisory Board. Again, it is an advisory board only, but the best part is that both of these individuals were in fact appointed by the ALP-dominated civic cabinet back in 2004-05. We have documentation supporting this, with Alderman David Hinchliffe's and now Kerry Rea, who is now a federal member. They really are desperate. So there we go. They are the sorts of things that this government this week—

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: They were appointed by Labor, and they are not involved in procurement. They are completely different standards. There is none of the corruption and cronyism that goes all the way up to the cabinet table of this Labor government. These are the sorts of things that the Premier talked about in this estimates committee, reassuring us that spending more money is going to fix the problem. There was clearly no acknowledgement that we need proper leadership on financial management. These budget

deficits will be over \$12.2 billion over the forward estimates. This is just not a proper way of managing our economy. They are clearly ignoring the Charter of Social and Fiscal Responsibility. When advice was given to the committee, the Premier said prior to the release of the economic and fiscal update that she had not directly taken advice of its effect on Queensland's top-grade credit rating. In order to meet the government's requirements under her own Charter of Social and Fiscal Responsibility, it requires management of the state's finances to maintain a top-grade credit rating. If the Premier did not seek advice of the effect of the EFU on the credit rating, she must not have sought assurance that her government was complying with the charter.

Of course, the jobs promise was given as well—talk about creating 119,000 jobs. We know that over 3,000 jobs have been lost in the last year. We now have 126,000 Queenslanders unemployed. At the same time last year it was 84,000—a 50 per cent increase. The budget papers show that these numbers will go up to 175,000 over the next few years. In the paper over the weekend Ron Monaghan, the secretary of the Queensland Council of Unions, doubted they would reach the 100,000 target, adding that including jobs as little as an hour a week was not meaningful.