



Speech by

John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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A1GP; SALE OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.31 am): As I go around the state and talk about issues of the economy that the government is providing stewardship of and service delivery, I constantly get the message—whether I am in the Torres Strait, as I was last week, or Townsville or Charters Towers, as I was last weekend, or Toowoomba or Rockhampton—that this is a government that cannot plan, cannot build and cannot deliver. There is no better example of it than we have seen again today when prosecuting arguments about the Gold Coast SuperGP. That event, held over the last weekend, was again shown to be poorly planned by this minister, who could not and will not answer the questions and clearly misled the parliament just a short month ago on 2 September when he read from a press release and also on 15 September and 17 September. Of course, in answer to our questions the Premier always states that if we have any information it should be provided to the appropriate authorities. Very obviously, that is what we did in this House on 2 September and on 15 and 17 September.

The opposition was doing the work of the government in looking into these issues about the financial circumstances of the A1GP. Clearly, the government is ready for opposition and this opposition is ready for government. Once again the minister today was making a silk purse out of a sow's ear and trying to say that last year's event had 297,000 people attending and this year's event had 205,000 people attending but somehow this year was more successful because television ratings were up on some TV channels. I know the people who own the businesses in Surfers Paradise. I know the people in the five-star hotels which the Premier said were fully booked, but I know they were not. The revenue was down 30 per cent and 40 per cent. The planning that was supposed to have been done clearly was not done. There are serious questions for this minister to answer, including the questions about ministerial responsibility that clearly this government has abrogated. There is form from this government about doing that over the years.

The minister is condemned by his own words of 15 September. His answer at page 2208 of *Hansard* states—

All the advice I am receiving from the partnership management committee of the Nikon SuperGP is that the event is going ahead as planned. It is well planned and it is going to be a great event. Because of the repetitive rumour mongering the opposition engages in, I sought a briefing with the partnership committee about the actions it has undertaken ... I have received the briefing and have had personal discussions with the chairman of the A1GP as late as yesterday to satisfy myself—

that is, on 14 September. Yet that chairman, Terry Mackenroth, has since said that he had questions. He said on the *7.30 Report* last week—

We dearly would have liked to have said to them a month or two months ago—

therefore, that was in August—

'Look, you're going to come. We don't think you're going to come. So we're going to cancel the contract.'

It begs the question again. The chairman supposedly had discussions with the minister on the day before 15 September, yet the minister comes in here and tells us that the event is on track and that we should stop questioning it. So we asked again through the shadow minister for sport, the honourable

member for Bundaberg, the same question about due diligence: had the government done the appropriate work and made the appropriate inquiries? Again, the minister stood up on 17 September and said—

I say to those opposite that they should stop listening to rumour and innuendo.

Let us have a look at some quotes from other people. The boss of V8s, Tony Cochrane, says—

Only an idiot would think there wasn't a problem with A1GP in the months leading up to this event.

Clearly, it begs the question as to what he thinks of the member for Mansfield, the minister. Very obviously, even the columnist in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, whom the Premier welcomed back to parliament—and we welcome back to the media gallery—Sue Lappeman, said—

It is now official, everything this Government touches turns to crap.

I will withdraw that word and replace it with the word 'excreta'.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! That is unparliamentary and I think you would have known that before you said that.

Mr LANGBROEK: I withdraw that word and replace it with the word 'excreta'. She goes on to say—
It goes beyond simple ineptitude, it's almost like they are under a curse.

We have quotes from numerous people saying that there should have been more due diligence done here. Of course, we have the honourable the Treasurer, who is questioning the questions that we have asked about this. He is like Sleepy from the *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* sitting over there between Dopey and Dozey. He was asleep while we lost our AAA credit rating. He may not have noticed that we voted against privatisation and selectively quotes from the platform of the LNP. Very clearly, we told the people what our plans were before the election and we will stick to what we told the people of Queensland before the election.

Very clearly, the Treasurer ignored the warning signs that were there. He is like Gollum out of control. Very obviously, he comes out with things that he does when obviously the Bligh Labor government has not done its own due diligence investigations. The minister has misled the parliament. He has concealed information from the public about the resignation—

Mr REEVES: I rise to a point of order. I find those words offensive and I ask him to withdraw. There is a process in place if he believes that is correct.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have been asked to withdraw those comments. Do you know the comments? I heard the comments as well.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am interested in what the words were that I am asked to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have been asked to withdraw. He has found them offensive.

Mr LANGBROEK: I withdraw.

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before you go on, member for Condamine, I am dealing with this, thank you very much.

Mr LANGBROEK: As I say, it is up to the minister to look at the words he used in this House on 15 and 17 September and abide by Westminster principles. They are that he is responsible for the things that happen with his department and he cannot abrogate that responsibility. Very obviously, given the form of this government, he is not prepared to do that. That is something that again shows that he is expressing confidence in this House that the other members of this House and the people of Queensland clearly do not have.

If this were a private company, the minister would be seen as the CEO and the Premier as chairman of the board. With the share price having gone through the floor, the shareholders would be demanding a purge of the board and of the CEO, and that is exactly what this minister will not take responsibility for.

The other issue that has come up over the last couple of days is the privatisation campaign. Again we heard the Treasurer speaking today. Members opposite have no shame. They come into this place and talk about the fact that they have to take these hard decisions on behalf of the people of Queensland when the Treasurer was asleep at the wheel and did not see the warning signs that we were to lose our AAA credit rating. Now the Premier is saying that she welcomes debate on this matter. Very clearly, we had that debate in June and we voted against the privatisations.

We have said very clearly that we oppose the privatisations. The government now spending another \$1.9 million on this campaign shows how it has no respect for the people of Queensland. Those opposite deceived the people of Queensland about their privatisation plans, deceived us about the election date, deceived us about the 100,000 jobs they are creating and of course deceived us about the fire sale of

assets. Now they are trying to buy their way out of trouble. They have no shame to come in here and try to turn around these issues of the A1GP and privatisation. They talk about protecting jobs and keeping Queensland strong, but all the statistics prove them to be not telling the truth. It is due to their management of the economy that they failed to keep our AAA credit rating. It is also a pity that the Premier did not spend \$1.9 million of Labor Party money telling Queenslanders the truth instead of now spending taxpayers' money to explain why she did not tell the truth.

What makes it even more galling is that the Treasurer and Premier have said that they will cut back on government spending in these tough economic times. This is a government that spends more on advertising than McDonald's, Toyota and Myer. Of course, recently it has also spent \$1 million on the 'saving jobs' tour, which should have been called 'saving the Premier's job'. Once again, despite all of the promises to cut back, the government is spending another \$1.99 million. While telling the truth costs nothing, so far telling untruths has cost taxpayers \$3 million and counting. Having helped to elect this government through union donations for campaigns, which totalled up to \$600,000, the unions are now saying that they are unhappy about it. A number of members of the ETU have said that they are very unhappy and that this will rebound on Labor.

However, the government will not listen. It is set in its ways, as is obvious from the issues surrounding the Abbot Point Coal Terminal, Queensland Rail assets, Queensland Motorways, the Port of Brisbane and Forestry Plantations Queensland. This week a release showed that the profit of Forestry Plantations Queensland has gone down which will affect any sale price that it will achieve. That is the very point that we made during our election campaign which the Treasurer refused to quote from fully. He quotes selectively. Obviously, you do not sell these things off in a depressed time in the market and when debts are associated with the asset. From the start we have said that, if they are not sold, we will not sell them. That is our commitment to the people of Queensland, but our greatest commitment is to tell them what we will do before an election and, most importantly, to stick to it after an election.