



Speech by

Lawrence Springborg

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

Hansard Wednesday, 3 June 2009

MOTION: QUEENSLAND ECONOMY

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.37 pm): I second the motion. It is very important as we debate tonight's motion that we take a moment to reflect on the tale of two governments. One was elected in Canberra in the year of 1996—a government that inherited \$96 billion worth of Labor debt, a government which was able to reconstruct the Australian economy, and after just over 10 years in government paid off \$96 billion worth of debt and left about \$60 billion in the coffers for the now Rudd government to be able to use. Look at the Queensland state Labor government which came to power just two years after that, went through the same boom times, and yet 10 years down the track has \$70-odd billion in debt, is heading towards a \$4 billion budget deficit, and is now looking at selling everything that is not bolted down in Queensland and is even going to sell anything that is bolted down in Queensland.

What is the fundamental difference? One was a Labor government; the other was a conservative government. Debt, taxes and dishonesty are in Labor's DNA—make absolutely no mistake about it.

We have heard the Premier and Treasurer wax lyrical about how external circumstances beyond their control have all conspired to haunt them and work against them—poor little souls. As they talk about \$14 billion worth of unforeseen revenue being stripped away in recent times and seek to blame the global financial crisis, what they do not tell us is that from the year 2000 to the end of the 2008 financial year they received a \$34 billion windfall in revenue.

Where did the last \$20 billion go? Where did that other \$20 billion go? It was sprayed away as the Labor Party does in Queensland, as the Labor Party does in Australia, as the Labor Party does world-wide because it is in its DNA. If those opposite have the money they believe they have to spend it. They never put it away for a rainy day, and they did not. They have had a \$34 billion windfall in revenue from the Commonwealth, from stamp duty, from payroll tax, from land tax, from royalties and from other sources. But where has the other \$20 billion gone? The Labor way; it has just dissipated into the ether. Let us have none of this nonsense about it being due to the global financial crisis or something else that went wrong somewhere else. It is Labor that is totally responsible for this and nobody else.

What we also see is the architect of this—one Mike Kaiser, the person who came up with the Q2 document based on his experience of working with Morris lemma in New South Wales. Recently he turned up in Queensland and said to the Premier, 'Have I got an idea for you. It was a real hoot in New South Wales. I said to Morris that we should privatise everything. He thought it was a great hoot. We did it. It went a bit pear-shaped down there but let's try it up here.' The Premier said to him, 'Great idea, but let's leave it until after the election.'

What we see now in the preparation of this budget is the document that the Labor Party ran from at the state election—the document that contained its secret plan for privatisation, the document that contained its plan for a new fuel tax in Queensland, the document that contained the attack on wages and conditions of the Queensland Public Service and public sector employees. That is the extent of Labor's dishonesty.

The one thing that I will give the Labor Party in Queensland—because we give it minus 10 out of 10 when it comes to economic and fiscal management and responsibility—is the one thing that it does very well, and that is spin, sensationalism, hysteria, conditioning of the electorate at large and blaming someone else and external circumstances so it can do what it wants to do. We have this nonsense about a global financial crisis being responsible for the current problem. It is not responsible for the fundamental issue. This government clocked up \$64 billion worth of borrowings before the global financial crisis. Even Moody's confirmed recently that this government went broke in a boom. It is the government's responsibility fundamentally.

Even in February when I asked the Premier in this place whether we were in a recession in Queensland she said no. The Treasurer was asked whether we were in a recession. He said, 'No, but it could feel like a recession.' This Labor government has caused this problem—no-one else.

(Time expired)