



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Wednesday, 24 March 2010

MOTION: SALE OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (5.56 pm): We have just heard a diatribe from the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability and, coming a minister who has chopped spending on the environment by something like \$22 million over three years, that is a bit rich.

Ms JONES: I rise to a point of order. That is incorrect. The member is misleading the House.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. It is a debating point, but not a point of order.

Ms SIMPSON: We have just heard from the government and the Premier who claim that they were truthful with Queensland about their intentions with regard to the assets sale before the last election. We have just heard from this government and a Premier that they are not sorry with regard to pursuing this plan to privatise public assets. They are not sorry about misleading the people of Queensland. They still have selective hearing with regard to what the people of Queensland are saying.

The recent polls show that Queenslanders do not trust this Premier because they know that they were misled deliberately by this government. It just does not wash when this government comes in here and says, 'What a surprise! We didn't know we had these financial problems and we only decided to sell these assets after the election.' That just stretches the imagination a little bit too far. Queenslanders do not like being treated like mugs. They are angry, they do not believe that this government has heard them and now they know from the debate and from the contributions of this minister in this forum that this government does not want to listen to their concerns and they are not sorry.

Even in the business community, where people may usually embrace certain types of privatisation with regard to government assets, there have been strong concerns about the way in which this government has gone about this program and the reasons it has gone about this program. The government would have us believe that it is about responsibly managing the economy. If ever there had been two phrases that are incongruous it is a Labor government and responsible economic management. This is the government that sent Queensland broke in a boom. Under this Labor Premier and her colleagues, this government was able to turn record surpluses into record debt. There should have been money in the kitty and money in the bank. But, once again, there is no sorry, there is no repentance from this government because it does not believe that it did anything wrong.

The government is continuing to make the same wrong choices and waste money without regard to the value of taxpayers' dollars. That goes on. The members opposite ask us how can things be improved and how would we do it better. We would fix the waste and improve the way in which money is spent. One project alone in this state blew out by \$800 million—the Ipswich Motorway. That is equivalent to 4,000 kilometres of rural roads. The western corridor recycled water pipeline blew out by another \$800 million. If the government wants to know how to finance the future, it should stop wasting the money it has today.

That is how you fix the finances of government. That will not be done by a government that does not think it has done anything wrong and is not sorry. The only answer this government has is to flog off assets and keep price gouging the people of Queensland. No wonder the people are angry.

This Premier does not want to take on the Leader of the Opposition in a debate. In fact, this Premier is running scared from being exposed to a debate on the facts of these issues because her government has run out of ideas and excuses. Colleagues from the Labor Party in the federal sphere are also wanting to keep their distance. Minister Albanese was critical of the way this government has gone about its privatisation program. Selling off Queensland Rail is like flogging off your house to pay your grocery bills. There are holes in the bucket in the way the government has wasted the public's money. It is now going to sell off the assets that have been bringing money into the coffers and bringing money into the bucket to provide more doctors and hospitals in Queensland. The members of this government laugh it off.

Why is the Premier running scared from a debate with the Leader of the Opposition? Because she does not have any answers to how her government will fix the economy. It has no debt repayment program. The asset sales is not a debt repayment program. It is a disgrace that this government cannot honestly defend its privatisation package without putting more money into an advertising campaign. Those opposite think that a debate is a one-way monologue.