



Speech by

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BLIGH LABOR GOVERNMENT

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.33 am): One year ago today the Premier rode to Government House in her car to call an election based on false pretences. The Premier rode to Government House knowing full well that the campaign she was about to launch was hollow. It was a sham. It was a fantasy. Queenslanders were badly misled. As in all campaigns, Labor wheeled out a list of campaign announcements. They made promises, they made projections, they made omissions and they misled Queenslanders with every single one of them.

I am proud to say that that was not the path taken by the LNP. In our campaign, every single element was coordinated, costed and targeted to Queenslanders' needs. We laid out a strategy to address the growing peril facing the state economy and to restore basic levels of services after 10 years of Labor failings. Labor did not treat Queenslanders with the same level of respect.

When this Labor Premier drew up her list, she was not fair dinkum. Bare faced, she drove to Government House. She launched her campaign. She stood before microphones and in front of cameras. She crisscrossed the state parroting words from her list. The Premier's list was not a list for change. It was not a list of positive initiatives, effective policies or ideas. It was not a list she intended to implement. It did not reflect the true state of Queensland's finances and the Premier knew it. It was not a list that the Premier, the Treasurer, the Deputy Premier or the Labor Party as a whole believed or endorsed.

So what was it? It was a shopping list of untruths. It was a shopping list of ingredients that, once purchased, would pave the way for Labor's return. It had nothing to do with the future of the state. It was that dishonest. It was a shopping list of empty platitudes, empty promises, half-truths and untruths that the Premier used to con her way back into power. Queenslanders took Premier Bligh at her word. They were conned.

Let us look at the Premier's shopping list. Her falsehoods began long before her trip to Government House, with repeated reassurances that the fuel subsidy would stay, that taxes would not rise, that electricity prices would not rise, that water prices would not rise. After the election, the fuel subsidy evaporated in record time, motor vehicle registration charges jumped 20 per cent and electricity prices and land tax increased—every one protected on the Premier's list, every one a promise dishonoured by this Premier. The people of Queensland were right to expect honesty from the Labor Party in that campaign, just as they expected and received honesty from the LNP.

Even after Queensland's AAA credit rating was lost, Labor did not drop the dishonesty. It was fully committed to its campaign of untruths regardless. The Premier began her campaign with an impossible promise to rebate employers 1¼ times the wages of their apprentices. The vow was so blatantly untrue it did not last until the news broadcast. But in hindsight, it was a pointer to how badly divorced from morality the Labor Party had become. Labor had no concept of what this state needed, it had no idea what it should do, and it had no idea what it would do if it got back into power. Premier Bligh was just parroting words. They were just words written on a shopping list of untruths.

Next, the Premier was up in Toowoomba. Pensioners were on the shopping list that day and, with the media in tow, the Premier set out with a special dupe for the elderly. Labor promised families that they would be able to get one of 200,000 cut-price solar hot-water systems for \$500 while pensioners would get theirs for just \$100. Who can say how many pensioners' votes turned on that generous commitment? Who can say how many environmentally conscious families walked into the polling booth on 21 March with the Premier's solar commitment in mind? Oops! After the poll, the Premier's promise got a makeover—a get-out clause—and today, with Peter Garrett's help, it seems that the Premier has escaped her obligations once again. The get-out clause was a proviso. Cheap hot water for Queensland families and pensioners was contingent on the Peter Garrett solar hot-water rebate and now the Garrett rebate is dead. So how many hot-water systems are there now, Premier? How much will families and pensioners really have to pay? That is with the maladministration that we have already seen from this government, where it is already making people pay over \$200 just to get their applications in anyway. I ask the Premier: how big is the hole that she has dug for Queensland this time? Another tick on the Bligh government's shopping list of untruths.

Tick fuel subsidy, tick car rego, tick land tax surcharges, tick solar hot water, and then there is a really big tick: 100,000 jobs. There was just no way, when the Premier ticked this box at her Labor Party launch, that she had any idea or strategy to provide 100,000 bread-winning jobs for breadwinners in Queensland. She had a strategy to please the union bosses. She had a strategy to keep her job. She had a strategy to con Queenslanders. But she had no strategy to keep her promises. We are one full year into this parliamentary term and there are 22,000 fewer full-time jobs than there were when that promise was made. A year ago the Premier parroted the words, but there was nothing to sustain them. A year down the track, she is leaping on the back of any jobs related announcement in a vain attempt to present herself as a strategy.

Queenslanders can see right through this Premier. Tick, tick, tick. These days, the ticking we hear in Queensland is not the sound of this arrogant Premier gloating over her shopping list of untruths; it is the tick, tick, tick of time running out for this government.

On listening to my comments today, members may have noticed something missing. There is something on the Premier's list that far overshadows anything that I have addressed in detail so far. The missing tick is the granddaddy of them all. It is the egregious mistruth that surrounds the Premier's secret campaign for asset sales. When the Treasurer went on the Madonna King program on 9 March 2009 he was asked would there be asset sales. 'No', he said. But the Premier and the Treasurer both knew that no matter what happened with the global financial crisis a major turnaround in the state balance sheet was required. Labor opposed the LNP's program to transfer government expenditure from the bureaucracy to front-line services. Once again we hear the misrepresentation today from the Premier. But when it attacked our program it left a gaping hole in its own financial prescription. On the Thursday prior to election day it coughed up the most woefully inadequate schedule of election costings ever presented by a sitting government. Labor presented a page and a half of disjointed figuring with six dot points. The intent was simply to cloak the massive hole Labor had torn in the state's finances. It was to hide the reality that without an efficiency dividend the only option remaining for the Labor Party was to sell state assets.

In his recently published attack on opponents of Labor's asset sales, Jim Soorley made it plain: having denied the logical course of action to correct the problems caused by years of Labor mismanagement, the only option left for Premier Bligh and Treasurer Fraser was the illogical one—asset sales and, worse than that, the forced sale of state assets at the bottom of the market. That was the big ugly secret masked by the Premier's little shopping list of mistruths.

Queenslanders are disappointed and angry at the untruths, the omissions and the chicanery that this Premier unleashed one year ago today. They are tired of the excuses. They are tired of an arrogant Premier who must answer for her misrepresentation. She has left Queensland deep in debt. Prior to the global financial crisis Queensland was \$64 billion in debt. It currently stands at \$85 billion. She is now pursuing unpopular, illogical and ineffective policies at the expense of ordinary people. As we tried to get from the Premier today, this Premier owes Queensland an apology. It is long overdue. She owes us a true account of our position and an honest strategy to address it.

We are a strong alternative government and, by any measure, recent history shows that our vision, honesty and commitment leave those of this government for dead. Today we have discovered that the Premier tries to assign a dollar value for media exposure. She sent a misspelt letter to the President of the United States on a trip to New York and tries to tell us that even though he refused to come and is not coming to Queensland, that somehow there is some sort of media exposure value that comes from it, but she cannot enumerate the damage to us for the media coverage of losing our AAA credit rating and the mistruths that we have clearly shown have been highlighted in the media. The Premier does not want to talk about that.

We have a vision for a better Queensland. We will grow the economy and stop the wasted duplication as we have seen in examples such as the desalination plant and the Traveston Dam. There will be proper planning. We will be honest and upfront with the people of Queensland. We will restore our AAA credit rating. We will abolish the fuel tax for regional and rural Queenslanders and all Queenslanders, and this Premier should be ashamed of herself.