



Speech by

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY; BLIGH LABOR GOVERNMENT

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.59 am): It is my pleasure to rise today especially given the acknowledgement by the Premier yesterday of International Women's Day. It is not hard to see where women across Queensland who hold positions of leadership have taken their inspiration from. We honour the first woman to lead a political party in Queensland, the LNP's Joan Sheldon—the first woman to exercise the powers and responsibilities of Premier when she became Acting Premier at various periods between 1996 and 1998. We honour the first woman to hold a cabinet position in Queensland, the LNP's Yvonne Chapman—breaking the glass ceiling. We honour the first and only female Lord Mayor of Brisbane, the LNP's Sallyanne Atkinson. We honour Dame Annabelle Rankin, who in 1946 for the Liberal Party became the first Queensland woman to sit in the federal parliament when she took her seat in the Senate. And who can forget Irene Longman from the Country and Progressive National Party—the first woman elected to this place in 1929. We also remember fondly today that 14 years ago the coalition became the first government in Queensland to introduce paid maternity leave for the Public Service—not Labor. It was the LNP that introduced paid maternity leave to recognise working women in the public sector.

This government goes from joke to farce. This morning in question time we saw that the Premier's own union, the ASU—also the union of the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Climate Change, the Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister for Transport—has put out press releases saying that the ASU continues not to support the position of the state government on the privatisation of assets matter and that 'members are encouraged to attend rallies against the sale of assets in their local communities'. But of course with ASU members rallying outside today, did we see the Premier or those ministers or any of these Labor ministers having the intestinal fortitude to go out and face them? No, we did not! They would not face their own members!

Of course in the last week we have had the spectacle of this Labor Premier admitting that after 12 years of the Beattie and Bligh governments—after 12 years of telling the people of Queensland that they will fix it, that Queenslanders can count on Labor—they have finally given in to what has been obvious to Queenslanders for some time: Labor cannot run hospitals or health. Last week Kevin Rudd delivered a massive vote in Premier Anna Bligh and state Labor. On Tuesday last week we saw the start of the final act of a desperate Premier and a desperate health minister who, having admitted their own failure in running Queensland Health, have taken the first step towards handing over the running of Queensland hospitals to Kevin Rudd and Nicola Roxon.

In the last 12 years let us look at what this tired Labor government has given us. It has given us four health ministers, with one of those ministers in jail for taking secret commissions. It has given us an explosion in waiting lists. It has given us an explosion in waiting lists to get on the waiting lists. It has given us a cut in the available number of hospital beds. It has been slammed by the Auditor-General for a total failure of planning for Queensland's future health needs. It has given us queues of ambulances parked outside public hospitals trying to get patients in but being told there is no bed available. It has overseen a system that has hundreds of children each month failing to be treated within reasonable times in Queensland's emergency departments.

So bad is the government at running Queensland's hospitals that the Premier thinks that the federal government—the same government that cannot even safely install roof insulation—is better placed to manage Queensland hospitals than a state Labor health minister. This is a minister who is strangely quiet about matters of health but who carries on like Foghorn Leghorn about everything he thinks he can score political points on in this House every morning in question time. What an amazing admission! Kevin Rudd cannot fix a roof, but he is still better than state Labor at organising brain surgery, or so the Premier would have us believe. So there you have it: Kevin Rudd's ministers and thousands of health bureaucrats in Canberra directing which regional health authorities get money for a brain surgery here, a heart transplant there. I can see it now: every muck-up by a Rudd-run hospital, every botched operation and every decision of a nameless, faceless bureaucrat in Canberra being appealed to the Commonwealth health minister will result in them then saying, 'It's not my problem! It's not my decision! Don't blame us! We just take the GST money and burn it up on Commonwealth bureaucracy.'

In the last week the people of Queensland have seen a Premier whose government has gone from bad to worse. This Premier and her Treasurer continue to thumb their noses at their own supporters. She continues to drive her ham-fisted campaign to sell off the state's assets in a fire sale. She is on the verge of destroying the state's finances for generations to come by taking steps down the road to handing to the Commonwealth 30 per cent of Queensland's GST revenue. I know, she knows and every member of this House knows that if Kevin Rudd is allowed to unpick the GST deal and steal Queensland's money the whole fabric of Commonwealth-state financial relations starts to fall to pieces, and the people of Queensland will be the big losers in the long run. If we hand over the lion's share of Queensland's GST money for hospitals, what next? The money for schools, for roads perhaps? At what point will the state government ever be responsible for running services ever again?

Not only would our hospitals, schools and roads infrastructure be horribly messed up for future generations to fix, but everyone in Queensland knows that state taxes will have to rise to pay for all of the new bureaucracy and so-called reform. I challenge the Premier and her government to give an ironclad guarantee that state taxes, charges, fees and levies will not rise to make up the GST shortfall. We all know that she cannot guarantee it and will not guarantee it, because she cannot. The state will have to go scrambling for more revenue and greater taxes like a whale that cannot get enough plankton, and the Bligh government will have to suck in more and more taxes to make up for the money she has gifted to Kevin Rudd.

Does anyone actually think that the amount Queensland Health spends will go down by the same amount that we pass over to the Commonwealth? Of course it will not! When we hand over our public hospitals, the cost of running health in Queensland will remain almost the same and the state will no longer have the rivers of gold that it used to have to fund Queensland Health. Queensland gets \$7.839 billion of the \$42.3 billion GST pool. That is about 18½ per cent of the GST pool. If respected economist Henry Ergas is correct and the states in total stand to lose \$140 billion over 10 years, the people of Queensland will lose \$25.94 billion over 10 years—an enormous amount of money for the state to give up. To make matters worse, the Premier has not rebuffed the Treasurer for saying that he was happy to hand over Queensland's mineral royalty scheme for a federal resource rent tax to be shared among the other five states, two territories and the Commonwealth government. This Premier and Treasurer simply will not stand up for Queensland. They are happy to do Kevin Rudd's dirty work and in doing so are putting our state back decades.

Let us be very clear: I will stand up for Queensland against Canberra and Kevin Rudd. Our nation is supposed to work on the principle of cooperative federalism. This announcement by Kevin Rudd and the Premier's likely capitulation means that cooperative federalism is dead. State governments are to become nothing more than branch offices of Labor Inc. The stench of arrogance and incompetence from this Premier, her Treasurer and her health minister continues to get stronger and stronger by the day. The Treasurer as recently as last Friday said that the Solar Hot Water Program would continue to be rolled out. Today it is cancelled. This Labor state government delivers another broken promise!

In a desperate bid to cling to anything, change the news story and divert attention from the ever-dysfunctional government that she leads, the Premier and the Treasurer this morning have resorted to throwing mud. Last week they decided to attack me for doing my job in readying the LNP for the next election and presenting to the people of Queensland the change and new direction that the people of Queensland so desperately need. When I announced that former Prime Minister John Howard was going to come and speak to the LNP party room, the Premier attacked me. She had the temerity to say that we were desperate. John Howard showed what good governments can and should do: good governments pay off Labor debt. I have invited him to come and speak to my troops because if we are elected we will be facing the same problem that John Howard and Peter Costello had when they were elected in 1996. I make no apologies for ensuring that my team is prepared for government and that we have learnt from

those who have gone before us, because we know that we will be left with almost \$85 billion in state government debt racked up by this Premier and her Treasurer.

John Howard and his government got the nation's books in order. We on this side of the House are proud of the legacy left by titans such as John Howard and Peter Costello. Paul Keating was an abject financial failure, Gough Whitlam nearly destroyed the nation's economy and Bob Hawke will help out only if you pay him a fee. As I said, I make no apologies for inviting John Howard. The Bligh government is in terminal decline and reeks of hubris. As one Labor Premier so eloquently put it many years ago, the people of Queensland are waiting on their porches with baseball bats. This time, the baseball bats are directed at this arrogant Premier. The government is utterly tired and worn out. It is time for another mutiny on the bounty and this 'Captain' Bligh is destined to be thrown overboard too.

(Time expired)