



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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QUEENSLAND LABOR GOVERNMENT

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.32 am): I rise today after yet another two hours of splendid democracy Queensland Labor style: an hour of backslapping, self-praise and breathtaking boasting followed by question time, which has been reduced to an hour of abysmal street theatre punctuated with belittling asides, guffaws and disparagement. We saw it again this morning from the Premier, who was having a go at an LNP website and asking whether it is a taxpayer funded website. I can assure honourable members that it is not a taxpayer funded website, unlike the websites of the Labor members opposite. This is a typical membership rewards situation, not dissimilar to a union rewards website through which you can buy products.

What you will not find for sale on our website is Queensland Rail. If you want to buy Queensland Rail, you have to go to the Bligh-Gillard Labor website. That is where you will find Queensland Rail for sale. What you will not find for sale on our website is Queensland Motorways. If you want to buy a highway or a road, you have to go to the Bligh-Gillard Labor website. That is where you will be able to buy Queensland Motorways. What you will not find on our website is Queensland Forestry Plantations. If you want to buy the right to knock down some trees and get some freehold land when the government said all it was selling was trees, you have to go to the Bligh-Gillard Labor website. That is where you can buy Queensland's forests. However, you will not find the paperwork in relation to the sales because they have not released that, either. What you will not find for sale on our website is a port. If you want to buy an entire shipping port and corporation, you have to go to the Bligh-Gillard Labor website. That is where you can buy yourself your very own port.

But hang on. If you went to the Bligh-Gillard website before the state election, you would not have seen that all these items were up for sale. They waited until after the election and then they put up the new special 'Labor shop', the Labor shop where Bligh and Gillard kept their sales secret until it was too late, the special Bligh and Gillard shop where Labor will not even let the public know what the sale conditions are and they will not even let the public know what has happened to the proceeds of the sale. Let us talk about what each party is selling. I have consistently invited the Premier to a public debate in a public forum so that we can discuss with real people Premier Anna Bligh's and Gillard's plan to sell off our assets under Labor.

This morning we have seen the parliament reduced to an absolute sham. I apologise to those children who are in the gallery right now whom you have welcomed, Mr Speaker, for having to see the disgraceful contributions from the Premier, the Treasurer and the Deputy Premier. Not 10 minutes into question time they saw that this Labor government no longer believes that it needs to be accountable to this parliament. There seems to be some belief that parliamentary democracy is just an excuse to malign and criticise the opposition or anyone else who dares to express a view contrary to that deigned to be acceptable by the Queensland ALP. I apologise to those children here today who have seen this government's version of democracy. Government members come in here day after parliamentary day and they hoot and fall about, laughing at their own supreme wit and wisdom.

I have news for those ALP members who so rejoice in their parliamentary hysterics: Queenslanders are not laughing with them. In fact, they are not even laughing at them. Queenslanders have seen enough of their antics and clowning around and they know that democracy is not supposed to be that way. These children will return to their classrooms tomorrow and hopefully they will not say to their parents tonight, 'I saw the Treasurer, the member for Mount Coot-tha, who looks like he is not much older than us, and he was screaming and yelling and telling jokes about the parliamentary process, and the Premier and the Deputy Premier were no better.'

The Queenslanders whom I talk to are disappointed that a Premier, Treasurer, Deputy Premier or minister of the Crown would stoop to such unbecoming behaviour. As I have already said, every day during question time there are schoolchildren in the gallery. The Speaker acknowledges them, but the ALP members in this place pay them little respect. How can they justify their behaviour to the children who sit upstairs to witness our democracy in action? I am routinely dismayed by the display that they witness. Do those children leave this place with a sense of the importance of our democratic institutions, or do they go home and ask their parents at the dinner table why elected grown-ups behave like children?

Over the weekend I had the opportunity to read the submissions of the Clerk and the Speaker with regard to the review of the committee system. Both are well researched and thought out documents that acknowledge that the current system of parliament is dominated by the government. Ministerial statements were once reserved for issues of state importance. We all know that they are now a clearing house for unreported press releases that are wasting the parliament's time. This morning's contribution from the minister for tourism was an adjournment speech, not a ministerial statement. The Clerk's submission points out that there has been exponential growth in the use of ministerial statements to the detriment of non-ministerial members.

In 1994 ministerial statements averaged 1.9 per sitting day. In 2010 the government is bombarding us with nearly 18 per day. The Clerk's submission makes clear that the 70 other members of the parliament, excluding the Speaker, are allocated just an average of three minutes per week to address matters of their choosing. The statistics included in the submission of the Speaker make it clear that six times as much time is taken by ministerial statements as compared with private members' statements. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion, from reading the submissions of the Clerk and the Speaker, that Queensland Labor has systematically squeezed the life out of parliamentary democracy over the past decade through amendments to parliamentary procedure and practice.

The sessional orders have been amended to increase the opportunity for self-praise and decrease the opportunity for scrutiny. Question time has become answerless and, as we have seen, it has become theatre. This long-term Labor government has become so focused at holding on to power that it has trampled over the very organ that delivers it, because the traditional parliamentary democracy also delivers accountability, and it is accountability that this government is most afraid of.

No doubt tomorrow and for every sitting day until the next state election we, the people of Queensland, will again suffer through the smug, goading, self-praise and mockery that has become the norm in this place. However, ALP members should keep this in mind: while they are laughing away in here, the public is not laughing with them. They are not laughing at them. They are waiting with baseball bats at the ready because of the statistics that I highlighted in my question this morning to the Premier that, once again, she refused to answer. That question included the following statistics: ABS CPI index increases of 22 per cent in household rent, 34 per cent in power charges, 23 per cent in gas and 32 per cent in water charges. There have been rises in paper rail ticket costs of 40 per cent and go card rises of 16 per cent. Fuel costs are up 17.5 per cent and rego is up 27 per cent.

What do we get from the Treasurer? I table a transcript of a speech that he gave following his recent trip to China titled 'Innovation in the public sector in China'.

Tabled paper: Document by the Hon. Andrew Fraser MP, titled 'Appendix B—Innovation in the Public Sector' [\[2751\]](#).

It is 32 pages long and it is indecipherable. This person has no connection with the real world and the people of Queensland, who are having to put—

Mr Fraser: I already tabled it last week. I'm glad you read it.

Mr LANGBROEK: It is for the benefit of members, who will be able to see how mind-numbingly out of touch this Treasurer is, because it is 32 pages of drivel. He begins by sucking up to his alma mater and the people in the audience but then, for 32 pages, says absolutely nothing.

Our economy is suffering a case of long-term 'Laboritis'. This morning the honourable shadow Treasurer referred to five reports by the major banks Westpac, CommSec, NAB, CCIQ and Access. When the Access Economics report was released the Treasurer released a press release that stated that the economy was on the right track. This Treasurer cannot lie straight in bed, because his phrase 'Queensland is headed in the right direction' does not appear in the Access Economics report. He should be sanctioned, but instead he is lampooned by his own ridiculous spin. All five reports slam the economic ineptitude of the Bligh Labor government and, of course, business conditions are very weak and poor.

Today the Treasurer wanted to come into this place and spruik the unemployment statistics, but we now have 136,000 unemployed, up from 114,000. This is what he considers to be the clever use of statistics, which again shows how out of touch he is with people on the ground throughout the state, because we have more people unemployed than we did last year.

Only this Treasurer could come in here and somehow proclaim that this state is leading the nation when we know that interstate migration is declining, because this is not the place it was. We know that it can be better. We know that the Treasurer is completely out of touch and the Premier is out of touch. We know that they went broke in a boom. Their performance is terrible and their negligent handling of Queenslanders' livelihoods is criminal.