



Speech by

John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard Wednesday, 1 September 2010

MOTION: SALE OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.30 pm): I move—

That this House:

1. Notes the Premier's public comments supporting the right for Labor MPs to have their say on the Labor government's plans to privatise assets;
2. Notes reported comments in the media from select Labor MPs claiming they wish to raise concerns about the privatisation of Queensland's assets;

And therefore, suspends so much of standing and sessional orders so as to allow, at 7.30 pm this night, the following members of parliament to be given 10 minutes each to raise their concerns with the state government's privatisation plans:

- the member for Murrumba, Dean Wells;
- the member for Bundamba, Jo-Ann Miller;
- the member for Townsville, Mandy Johnstone;
- the member for Keppel, Paul Hoolihan; and
- the member for Mundingburra, Lindy Nelson-Carr.

It is terrific to have an opportunity to put on the record the LNP's position on Labor's privatisation, and of course it is even better tonight because for the first time we might get to hear the views on privatisation of those members opposite in the parliament. We have heard lots of talk from this government out in the electorate about this issue—lots of foisting things on the electorate that were not promised at the last election—but the member for South Brisbane has come into this place and foisted it on the people of Queensland, showing contempt for the views of the people of Queensland when we put forward our manifestos at the last election led by the then Leader of the Opposition, the member for Southern Downs.

Of course, some of these members have had a bit to say in their electorates but they have been strangely silent in this House. Today they have the opportunity to stand up for their electorates in this place. Today they have the opportunity to put on the record their views about the way their Labor government has treated the employees of Queensland Rail, the ports, the forestries and of course the motorways. Today they have the opportunity to clearly enunciate their views so that the electors know that they are not being two-faced—saying one thing at home in the electorate while being totally silent here, where it matters.

Last weekend we heard from these five members that they were going to go to caucus and express their views about privatisation and leadership, but of course yesterday the Premier had to retract her statement that there had been no discussion about leadership because of course there had! But the Premier cannot even tell the truth between caucus on Monday and parliament on Tuesday.

The question is: will these Labor members take the opportunity, or will they squib it? Will the member for Bundamba speak up for rail workers, or will she run and hide? Will the member for Keppel put the interests of his electors before his ambition to have a ministerial chauffeur? Will the member for Townsville articulate the views of the north, or will she cower to the will of the Treasurer and the Premier?

Will the member for Mundingburra—a former minister—express the views of the residents of the Railway Estate in her electorate, or will she allow herself to be gagged by the Brisbane factional bosses? I was at the Railway Estate State School on the Saturday of the federal election, and CFMEU members came up to me wearing shirts saying 'Queensland—not for sale'. They said that this Premier had sold them out and that they would not be voting for Labor again, either at that federal election or at the subsequent state election.

What about the member for Murrumba, the Hon. Dean Wells? Once a lion of the Labor Party—a former education minister, a former Attorney-General—he has now been reduced to kittenesque stature. Is he a man of conviction, or is he a man of compliance and of docile concurrence with the young turk from Mount Coot-tha? Will he roar like the lion that he once was, with some of that verbiage that we know he comes in here with, or will he allow himself to be gagged? Is he going to pump out his chest, or will he be led around by the nose?

Today is the day we discover just how serious these members are. Today is the day we also discover how genuine the Premier is when she states that she supports the right of Labor MPs to have their say. We again heard from the Premier on Monday that she was listening and hearing after the federal election result, but of course she has then subsequently come into this place and said that nothing will change. Today is the day we discover if it is business as usual—when Labor MPs just take their instructions from the Premier—or if they are really listening. That is what the people of Queensland deserve to hear in this place. We need to hear the views of their electorates, where the people have clearly said that there was no consultation with the electorates about privatisation, there was no consideration for the long-term economic interests of Queensland, there was no consideration for what is going to happen to prices—and we have seen what happened when this government privatised the retail arm of electricity. There was a guarantee that there would be no increase in electricity prices. There have been no customer service obligations enforced by this government. There is debate about how it should be sold off, and today we are seeing debate within Queensland Rail as the government potentially considers changing the vertically integrated model of sale. There is debate from the CEO of Queensland Rail about the threat to jobs.

When this government has privatised, it has done it without consultation, and these members need to stand up. If they are prevented from speaking, it will be proof positive that nothing has changed—the same old Labor, the same old cowardly MPs selling out their voters for a slap on the back and a wink from the most unpopular Premier in Queensland's history. But worse than that, it goes to the heart of what they do when they are in their own electorates. When speaking to their local media—and I have been in many of these areas—I have heard members talking about what it is they are going to do when they get to Brisbane, and then when they get to Brisbane they do not actually do anything like that at all. They are in the caucus room and supposedly saying something, but there is never any proof of that outside of the caucus room.

I have been puzzled in the past couple of weeks by the statements of these members. As I have said already, there are two personas—one for the electorate, one for the parliament. So who do we see in the chamber today? Do we see the Bundamba Jo-Ann Miller or the Brisbane Jo-Ann?

Mr Schwarten: What you say in the boardroom is different from what you say here.

Mr LANGBROEK: I have said this before in answer to those interjections in terms of what I say in the boardrooms: there are no Chatham House rules for me! I will say everything in the boardroom that I say here.

Government members interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: No Chatham House rules for me!

Mr Schwarten: You'll be struck down!

Mr LANGBROEK: I will say and do in the boardroom what I say here, because it will not take much for me to contrast with this government, which refuses to tell people what it is going to do and then changes things after the election.

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: The Minister for Public Works is the worst example of it, and that misrepresentation that happened at the Master Builders function earlier this year—

Mr Schwarten: Absolutely true!

Mr LANGBROEK: I called him because he tried to imply that our policies would be a reflection of the things that the Master Builders had done.

Mr Schwarten: Absolutely. That's what you said.

Mr LANGBROEK: I said very clearly then that I would not be misrepresented by the member for Rockhampton, and I will not be misrepresented by him now. It might have worked with other people, but it will not work with me because I am straight up and I am going to tell people what we are going to do and then we are going to deliver it. Are we going to see the Townsville Mandy or the Brisbane Mandy? Will it be the Keppel Paul or the Brisbane Paul? Will it be the Mundingburra Lindy or the Brisbane Lindy? Will it be the Murrumba Dean or the Brisbane Dean?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable gentleman should refer to people by their correct title.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Speaker.

Mr Schwarten: What projects are you reassessing? Tell us that!

Mr LANGBROEK: These members cannot go on having split personalities, and I note again in the interjection from the member for Rockhampton a misrepresentation of what the shadow Treasurer said on radio on Saturday. What we have committed to and will continue to commit to is stopping the waste of this Labor government that adds up to billions of dollars in our annual budgets as exemplified by the Health payroll crisis and as exemplified by the water grid and the desalination plant.

That is what we have committed to. As I showed this morning, the reassessment also comes from the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning and the Premier herself, who said that they are going to reassess the SEQ plan. I have tabled those papers. As if the member for Rockhampton is not reassessing Shared Service, because if he is not, given that the Auditor-General has just given a damning indictment of his failures—costing hundreds of millions of dollars—he should be out of a job. Of course they are reassessing Shared Service. That is what they should be reassessing. If the member for Rockhampton, the Minister for Public Works, is not prepared to do it, then clearly he is derelict in his duty.

Either those members oppose the greatest betrayal of Queenslanders ever or they endorse it. Either they oppose the fire sale of some of this state's most strategic assets or they endorse it. There is no middle ground; nowhere to hide. I am going to travel to each of those members' electorates to let the people there know how those members have deceived and misled the people of Queensland. I will be in Townsville again on Friday and Saturday and in Cairns. I look forward to going to the cafes at North Ward and the Railway Estate to explain to those electors that their spineless and witless members have sold them out. I will tell them how they were tricked and deceived into believing that their Labor members would stand up for them. I will tell them that they are right to be angry with Labor.

The LNP is the only party that will properly represent the interests of their families, that will get Queensland moving again, that will tell the truth before the next election, that will restore trust and dignity, that will fix this state's economy, that will fix the health system, that will keep taxes and charges low, that will cut the waste, that will cut the debt and that will get back Queensland's AAA credit rating. When the time comes to vote I say to those members to vote with their conscience, vote with 85 per cent of Queenslanders and vote with the LNP.