




Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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BLIGH LABOR GOVERNMENT

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (12.16 pm): Waste is a way of life for this Bligh Labor government. The financial distress and hardship caused by Labor's waste and mismanagement have created a new way of life for thousands of Queenslanders. While thousands of Queenslanders are struggling to make ends meet—to pay their electricity and water bills, fill their cars and put food on the table—this Labor government has been haphazardly throwing taxpayers' money away.

The failed Health payroll system is a stand-out example of the government's waste. A sum of \$210 million in additional funding has been spent on the payroll system as a result of a complete bungle that should never have occurred. Not only did this throw taxpayers' money into a void; it also caused hardship for the Health staff directly affected—those who were either not paid or not paid on time. This waste is made more stark by the fact that that \$210 million could have been used to employ 3,750 much needed nurses. Our health system is poorer for the waste and for the wasted opportunity.

In this year's budget, every capital statement will show blow-outs in spending due to mismanagement, not due to additional services. Projects such as the nation-building housing program and BER are filled with waste, excessive costs, management fees and the like. When non-government organisations can build houses for about half the price of those built by the government and Catholic and independent schools can show up government waste in school hall programs because they know how to spend a dollar more wisely, it becomes evident that waste is not a one-off in this government. It is endemic, it is everywhere and it is costing Queenslanders a lot in terms of wasted money and lost services. For every \$100,000 wasted, our communities miss out on the employment of front-line service people in areas such as child safety, schools and hospitals. There are resources and equipment that cannot be purchased for operating theatres, classrooms and youth detention centres. There are roads that cannot be fixed and infrastructure that cannot be built—and the list goes on and on.

Just a quick list of waste through infrastructure programs adds up to billions and billions of dollars. As household water bills are ballooning, Queenslanders know they can fairly and squarely blame the Labor government for a wasted \$9 billion on the South-East Queensland water grid, more than \$2 billion for a water recycling plant that is largely sitting idle, \$600 million wasted on the failed Traveston Crossing Dam, \$450 million on the northern pipeline interconnector stage 2—also known as the pipeline to nowhere—\$1.1 billion for the mothballed and rusted Tugun desalination plant, \$350 million for Wyaralong Dam which is not even connected to the grid, and \$200,000 for water restriction fridge magnets that were never distributed. This is just one isolated area and it accounts for billions of dollars in waste, in money not spent wisely and no bang for buck for taxpayers. There are many other examples such as the more than \$112 million that was wasted on the smart card driver's licence that is not that smart.

Multiplied across every department we see the Bligh Labor government's reckless waste become apparent. This is the same government that is also imposing waste on other areas of the state as our small business, industry and community organisations fight a growing mountain of red tape and bureaucratic expenditure. Compliance has never been more expensive nor more onerous. Under Labor, community organisations routinely go through up to nine different government agencies just for one funding

application. These are the same organisations which have to pick up the pieces when Queenslanders can no longer pay their bills. As we have heard, this Labor government's debt—its wasteful debt, its plan not to repay this debt—is resulting in \$540,000 per hour in interest payments with peak debt in the next two years. That is \$540,000 per hour which could have been spent on doctors, nurses and front-line services. It could have been spent on relieving the pressure of the high cost of living that has come about due to this government's reckless approach to running government. Waste costs people in their hip pocket. It costs them through higher registration and higher costs of living. Ultimately, it is due to this government's mismanagement.