



Speech by
Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

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NEWMAN GOVERNMENT, PERFORMANCE

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (12.10 pm): Yesterday it was revealed in the *Brisbane Times* that the Treasurer has plucked a figure of 20,000 government workers out of the air. The Treasurer told the *Brisbane Times* that in relation to picking the year 2000 as the year of the 'right sized Public Service'—

Well I think if you go back over time you look at those sorts of numbers and you have to start somewhere. We can't go back to 1900.

This follows Dr Doug McTaggart's testimony under oath to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission that the government was not borrowing to pay 20,000 government workers. Now the Premier tells us, as if it is some surprise, that he will not have to sack 20,000 public servants—part of an elaborate plan to allow Mr Newman to play 'hero' when he sacks fewer people and says people should be grateful. The opposition has known all along that the government was not borrowing to pay 20,000 public servants and there was no need for jobs and services cuts. Labor had a return to surplus locked in for 2014-15, and not even Peter Costello could deny this.

In response to question on notice 368 demanding evidence for the Premier's statements, the Treasurer referenced figures from the previous government's midyear review in an attempt to invent an answer. This follows on from the Premier telling ABC Radio last week that the midyear review from before the election was a justification for job cuts. If these latest excuses are to be believed, then the question this government needs to answer is: why did it not tell Queenslanders about jobs and services cuts before the election? The fact is that this government is not making cuts to pay down debt, as it keeps telling Queenslanders; the cuts are to pay for election promises. It is as simple as that. The facts are, on the Treasurer's own admission, that this government's debt number is the same as the previous government's.

In June the Treasurer said that this plan was a 'debt binge' and described it as 'Labor's plan' that was placing pressure on the credit rating. The LNP is now in government and it needs to take responsibility for its plans, and this LNP government's plan is to increase debt by more than \$20 billion over the next three years. The story it does not want to tell yet is what infrastructure it will produce to reach this debt. As much as the LNP invents other figures to hide the truth, Labor left gross debt at \$62 billion and net debt at \$24.92 billion. For some context, New South Wales has a net debt of \$40.27 billion and Victoria \$25.6 billion. Labor in government invested more on infrastructure per person on average over the last decade than any other state in Australia at a time when it was needed.

Labor locked in and delivered hospital projects, including the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, Gold Coast University Hospital and upgrades to Cairns Base Hospital and Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Mount Isa and Yeppoon hospitals. Most people would understand that you do not need a new hospital every year. Labor embarked on generational infrastructure spending that had debt peaking at \$85 billion—just as the LNP government now does. The Treasurer has announced in his interim response to the Costello audit that he needs to find \$4 billion to avoid exceeding debt of \$85 billion 'after policy decisions are implemented'. Two days before the election, as shadow Treasurer—the very same person—he told Queenslanders that the LNP would need \$4 billion of savings over the same period to meet election commitments. Some \$4 billion in savings over three years—the identical cost the LNP put on its own pre-election promises!

No matter how much it tries to say otherwise, the truth is that the LNP planned to cut jobs and services to fund promises before the election but did not tell Queenslanders. It said that government workers' jobs were safe. They are not. It said it would pay down debt. It is not. When the Treasurer points to a report by Moody's Investors Service from last week as validation of the Costello audit, he is just continuing to be tricky. The Moody's report uses May Treasury figures only publicly available in the Costello audit—the very same figures the audit itself attacks. Under oath, Dr McTaggart said that the Costello audit was not resourced to do economic modelling and that findings are based on opinion. We all know whose opinion the audit is based on—Peter Costello's—and it is not even an independent one!