




Speech by

Hon. Mark McArdle

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

Hansard Tuesday, 19 June 2012

MOTION: BUDGET STRATEGIES

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (6.00 pm): I am not quite certain who is contesting the leadership over there, but I thought the member for Bundamba was putting on a very good show there for a couple of seconds. I start by making this one point: I think the member raised the issue of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. I am yet to see a brick on that site.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr McARDLE: They pulled the funding for that about four years ago. I think the member just said, 'Wait and see what happens.' That is exactly right, because the health minister on this side of the House is going to deliver that hospital on time and on budget, and we are going to have the best health service right across the Sunshine State.

What a load of rubbish! We are now facing \$100 billion worth of debt in this state because of that mob over there—the remnants of a government that was bereft of any concept except to put it on the credit card, put it on the tick, run it up, because they knew their time was coming. Now we have an LNP government, and I tell the people of Queensland right now that the LNP is going to save this state and build for the future like no other government in this state has. It is about time the former Labor government—the Labor rump, I should say—accepted the fact that it was liable and the members opposite are now liable and will always be liable for the perilous state of our budget. Three of their members sat around the cabinet table for a number of years making the decisions that drove this state into almighty debt.

Let us get down to tintacks. Between 2004-05 and 2011-12 the CPI increased by 21.2 per cent. Public transport costs went up by over 50 per cent in that same period—the management of a Labor government. Electricity prices went up by 60 per cent—the management of a Labor government. Gas went up by 67 per cent—the management of a Labor government. Motor vehicle registration went up by something like 70 per cent and state water charges increased by over 100 per cent. The CPI went up by 21.2 per cent. And they claim they are proud of their record when they drove people to scrimp and save to meet their daily living expenses.

Let us talk about water. We have a debt of over \$9 billion on the water grid and the water itself—\$9 billion on the tick. The LNP government is now working to make certain that we get out of this mire, that we get out of the mess delivered by the Labor government. It will take us a long time to do so, but we are going to do it.

The debt on Energex, Ergon and Powerlink went from \$6.1 billion in 2005-06 to \$12.6 billion in 2010-11. It has doubled. That is the legacy of a Labor government. That is the legacy of a government bereft of any planning, of any understanding of moving forward and making certain that we get not only the infrastructure we need but also the balance sheet to go with it. The interest paid on that debt between 2005-06 and 2010-11 jumped from \$327.5 million to \$807 million. That amounted to \$252 per customer right across this state. We are paying interest on the debt because this government could not get it under control. We will continue to pay the debt until we get in a position where that \$100 billion is no longer of consequence and we can move forward together.

I make this other point very quickly as I know the health minister will touch upon the payroll debacle. We touch upon the financial consideration that occurred because of the debacle, but the cost to Queenslanders is also the emotional anguish of those doctors and nurses. This is more of the Labor Party strategy of not doing the basics—not even getting the basics right.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr McARDLE: They drove people almost to bankruptcy because of sheer incompetence.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections across the chamber.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member on my right. I call the minister.

Mr McARDLE: We could spend all day debating the debacle of the Labor Party and still need time for two more weeks of debate because it is so long, so extensive. At the end of the day the LNP government will make it right, will make it better, and the ALP will be consigned to history.

(Time expired)