




Speech By  
**Curtis Pitt**

**MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE**

---

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Unemployment**

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (12.11 pm): Queenslanders will have the opportunity to ‘vote for Kevin on September 7’. They will have to chance to vote for Labor and jobs and growth—in stark contrast to what is being offered by the coalition. We are learning the hard way from the Newman government here in Queensland that when the LNP promise to support jobs, to grow the economy and to lower the cost of living, they in fact mean to do the exact opposite.

As recently as yesterday, the Premier said that nothing was more important to this government than jobs for Queenslanders. This is a little hard to believe when you look at the facts. Since the Newman government was elected in Queensland there has been a loss of 13,700 full-time jobs, with the unemployment rate rising to a decade high of 6.4 per cent. Under the first full financial year of the Newman government jobs growth in Queensland has been at its weakest in more than two decades. The last time jobs growth in Queensland was this bad in percentage terms was 1990-91, when the Australian economy was last in recession.

The Premier is attempting to blame everything except his government for what are shocking unemployment figures. The Premier blames the carbon tax and the mining tax while making out that his sacking of tens of thousands of people, his slashing of employment programs and his tax hikes have nothing to do with it. These excuses are just that—hollow and meaningless excuses.

While Queensland has lost 13,700 full-time jobs since March 2012, the nation has created 56,400 full-time jobs seasonally adjusted. In trend terms, Queensland has lost 14½ thousand full-time jobs, compared with growth of 75,500 full-time jobs across Australia, since March 2012. For the Premier’s benefit, unemployment was rising under the LNP prior to the introduction of the carbon tax or the mining tax, and neither explains the significant rise in unemployment particular to Queensland under the Newman LNP government. Queensland now has the highest unemployment rate in mainland Australia. Only the Premier’s home state of Tasmania has higher jobless figures.

Queensland’s unemployment rate and loss of full-time jobs is pushing up the national unemployment rate. The same figures Joe Hockey attacks federally are in part the result of the actions of this Newman LNP government. On the Treasurer’s now preferred trend measure, the unemployment rate of six per cent is above the peak during the global financial crisis and has been higher than at the 2012 election each and every month since April last year.

Queenslanders are starting to find out that an LNP promise to support jobs is code for the exact opposite, just like the LNP’s promise to lower unemployment to four per cent in Queensland. Nobody voted for decade-high unemployment in Queensland of 6.4 per cent. Let us be clear about that.

The LNP’s rhetoric about growing four pillars has also been shown to be nothing more than hollow words. After promising to grow the economy, the LNP has seen the economy slow since they took office. It is not forecast by Treasury to recover for another two years. The Treasurer is still

insisting that growth of four per cent under Labor represented a basket-case economy. Somehow, an economy growing slower, at three per cent under the LNP, is better.

Queenslanders will also be wary of promises from the LNP and Tony Abbott to lower the cost of living. The Treasurer finally conceded at estimates last month that taxes per Queenslanders have increased by \$257 since the Newman government was elected. Mind you, this was after he initially described my suggestion, based on his own budget figures, as 'rubbish'. This represents a slug of more than a thousand dollars for the average household of four. Just last week we experienced another Newman government tax increase, with tax on insurance going up by \$990 million, or by more than \$110 per year for the average household, from 1 August.

At the election the Premier, in his so-called 'Contract with Queensland', promised to lower household bills by \$250 to \$330 a year—another broken promise. As part of the Premier's contract he pledged to lower electricity bills by \$120 a year—another broken promise. The electricity price increase this financial year is the largest on average that Queensland has ever seen—at 22.6 per cent, or \$268. Once again the Premier has attempted to sheet home blame for his government's failures to the carbon tax or any initiative that might help the environment. In reality, if there were no factors contributing to electricity price rises other than the green initiatives, the average increase would be just three per cent, not a record 22.6 per cent. That is hurting Queensland households right across-the-board.

From the performance of the LNP in Queensland it is clear that the only vote for jobs, growth and a positive future on 7 September will be a vote for Kevin Rudd and the Australian Labor Party.