




Speech By
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MOTION: NEWMAN GOVERNMENT, ELECTION COMMITMENTS

Newman Government, Election Commitments

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (5.30 pm): I move—

That this House notes that the Newman government has breached its Contract with Queensland and failed to honour its election commitments.

At the 2012 election, the now Premier signed a pledge with Queenslanders entitled Contract with Queensland. It included five key pledges from the Premier with Queensland families. The first was to grow a four-pillar economy, which included a commitment that 'The LNP will reduce unemployment in Queensland to 4% in six years'. Under the first year of the Newman government, unemployment hit decade highs, peaking above levels seen during the worst global economic crisis since the Great Depression. We now have 14,300 more people in the unemployment queue since the LNP took office, with the unemployment rate now at 5.9 per cent up from 5.5 per cent at the election. The first year of the Newman government recorded the worst result for jobs growth in more than two decades. The last time jobs growth was this bad in Queensland was in 1990-91, when the Australian economy was last in recession. Now the Treasurer is fast back-peddling on the LNP's pledge with Queenslanders to lower unemployment to four per cent, saying it was only ever a 'stretch target'. What the hell is a 'stretch target'? When it comes to creating jobs, this Newman government has let Queenslanders down. Their result on jobs is an 'F' for fail.

What about their promise to grow the economy? Recently, the Treasurer boasted about the October quarter CommSec *State of the States* report. This report has lowered the ranking for Queensland's economic growth from second at the election to third now. The overall CommSec ranking for Queensland has only just recovered back to where it was at the election. Apparently, the Treasurer is proud of this slower growth. In the last financial year household consumption, dwelling investment, business investment and private investment were all weaker than in 2011-12, according to the Queensland State Accounts. This is all clearly detailed on Queensland Treasury's website. Back then, the Treasurer was calling an economy that had stronger domestic growth and investment a 'basket case' and a 'mess'. Now that the economy is recording slower domestic growth under the LNP, apparently it is 'great'. This financial year, growth is forecast by Treasury to slow under the LNP to three per cent, down from four per cent under Labor. When it comes to economic growth in their Contract with Queensland, so far it is another 'F' for fail. We all know what happened to the LNP's commitment to business, to increase the payroll tax threshold each year for six years. That is another fail in its pledge with Queenslanders.

The second pledge in the Premier's Contract with Queensland, captioned 'Our commitment to you', is to 'lower the cost of living for families by cutting waste'. The LNP's cost-of-living pledge included a promise to lower the cost of living for Queensland families by \$250 to \$330 per year, including lowering power bills by \$120 per year. So what has this Newman government done? It has increased taxes per household by more than \$1,000 for the average family of four, with a hike in

insurance duty and an increase in the fire levy which has been extended to regional areas. What? Those opposite don't believe me? Again, this figure is from Treasury in the budget papers. The Newman government has hiked insurance duty by \$110 per year for the average household, up to \$215 in disaster-prone areas. Does the LNP want to do something to help out with insurance costs? It should axe its hike on insurance duty! And that does not include the bills that will hit regional businesses in the order of tens of thousands of dollars. The fire levy will cost households in regional Queensland an additional \$90 per year. What about electricity bills? In the first year, the LNP increased electricity bills by more than \$140 on average, despite its attempt at freezing tariff 11. This year electricity bills are recording their largest increase ever—

Madam SPEAKER: I am sorry, Manager of Opposition Business. Please pause the clock. I am going to reset the microphones as there is feedback in the chamber.

Mr PITT: This year electricity bills are recording their largest increase in Queensland's history at 22.6 per cent or \$268 on average. The Premier and Tony Abbott like to blame the carbon price and green schemes. However, this year's electricity price rise would be just three per cent—not nearly 23 per cent—if only the impact of the carbon tax and green schemes were factored in. These are the facts from the Queensland Competition Authority. The LNP does not like it when facts get in the way of a good story. What of the \$80 water rebate for people in regional areas, which was never delivered? The cost of living for the average family has increased by \$1,485 under the Newman government. The Newman government's pledge to every Queensland family to lower the cost of living by \$250 to \$330 has been fundamentally broken. Another 'F' for fail.

The third pledge in the Premier's Contract with Queensland was to 'deliver better infrastructure and better planning'. So far, the Newman government has lowered infrastructure investment by \$416 million in 2015-16 compared with the previous government, with investment \$1 billion per annum lower by 2016-17. The only infrastructure project that has been announced by the Newman government is a new office tower for the Premier and his ministers. In contrast, the previous Labor government embarked on the largest hospital building program in the nation. Over four years, we provided \$60 billion in new infrastructure, including upgrades and expansions to hospitals in Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Mount Isa, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast. Our priority was to invest in the health and education infrastructure needed to boost our economy and productivity into the future. This Premier is focused on ensuring that his own surroundings are as palatial as possible. With public and private infrastructure investment projected by Treasury to contract or fall over each of the next three years, this part of the LNP's pledge is also an 'F' for fail.

The fourth pledge in the Premier's Contract with Queensland is to 'revitalise front line services for families'. I almost do not know where to start on this one. This morning, the Premier tried to think of a front-line service he had revitalised. He stood there for what seemed like an eternity, trying to think of something, before quoting emergency department statistics from Ipswich Hospital. It must be the first thing that was in his book. There was no mention that this followed an investment by the previous state and federal governments of \$6.7 million for 12 emergency treatment spaces and six short-stay beds or the investment of \$122 million to accommodate another 84 beds. Meanwhile, this LNP government has been ripping funding out of that hospital. The Premier's hypocrisy is truly staggering. For the Newman government to sack around 20,000 workers, including around 800 nurses and 350 TAFE staff, and say they have 'revitalised front-line services' is a level of spin that Shane Warne would be proud of. Madam Speaker just disconnected me.

Madam SPEAKER: I apologise. I managed to turn off the member's microphone.

Mr PITT: Madam Speaker, the feedback you are hearing is the feedback that their constituents are giving them on how they have failed Queenslanders. I say 'around' 20,000 workers because the Newman government has continually refused to detail the exact number of workers it has axed. It follows the Premier's pledge before the election that government workers had 'nothing to fear'. I will say that again: government workers had 'nothing to fear'. Let us move on to the Treasurer's promise, which was that there would be 'no forced redundancies'. What makes up that figure of around 20,000? How many forced redundancies would be in that? When it comes to revitalising front-line services, the Newman government has recorded yet another—what is it? 'F' for fail.

The final pledge of the Premier's Contract with Queensland is to 'restore accountability in government'.

Ms Trad: Ha!

Mr PITT: Hold your laughter, member for South Brisbane. This pledge includes commitments to have a 'war on waste' and to 'be honest and accountable'. When it comes to waste, this government

has already sold seven office buildings for \$226 million below their value, with additional rent costs exceeding half a billion dollars. This means that the LNP is on track to waste more than \$750 million of taxpayers' money on the Premier's new office tower. On the numbers, this is arguably worse than Health payroll implementation issues and is a waste of taxpayers' money by design rather than omission, but less than the dubious headline figure parroted by the one-trick-pony health minister. This also follows some pretty vicious and public attacks by the Premier on the head of his Health payroll inquiry. The Newman government is also spending \$3 million per year to rent empty office space. We have had \$4.3 million spent on a self-promotional newsletter for the Premier and \$4.6 million on a Queensland Plan. We will have to wait to see if it delivers any outcomes. I will not go into the taxpayers' money provided to KFC for rubbish bins. That names just a few examples of Newman government waste.

As for promising to be 'open and accountable', we have already seen that this is a government for the big end of town. It is a cash-for-service government, not a fair government for all Queenslanders. Worse still, it is a cash-for-legislation government. This government has raised a remarkable \$8.5 million through political fundraising over six months, while promising to outsource and privatise public services. Queenslanders should examine very carefully those donations. Let us not forget that the Premier stood by the member for Redcliffe and asked Queenslanders to vote for him. He vouched for him for months and months and months. Of course, later on he wanted nothing to do with him and distanced himself, as if somehow the member is now contagious.

When it comes to all five of the Premier's pledges in his Contract with Queensland, the LNP has categorically failed. Not one of the Premier's election pledges in his Contract with Queensland has been met. This is an arrogant, unaccountable, loose-with-the-truth government that has breached its Contract with Queensland and has fundamentally broken its election commitments. The reason those opposite are feeling uncomfortable is they know that their seats are going to be up for grabs at the next election. Quite rightly they should be worried, because the government will get it from both barrels when people realise exactly what promises it has broken. Can-do government? I don't think so!