




Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Commission of Audit

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (2.15 pm): The independent Commission of Audit's final report and the government's response is a plan; it is a plan for today, tomorrow and the future to provide better services for all Queenslanders, including Queensland families. The independent Commission of Audit report shows that business as usual is not an option, that the government must take a modern approach to government processes and structures which have been largely unchanged for decades. Over the last decade the Labor Party and its union mates presided over a significant decline in productivity which has been more substantial than the rest of Australia. The level of productivity in Queensland in 2011-12 was below the level recorded just a decade earlier. The message is clear: we cannot continue with the same tired old processes. Queensland and Queenslanders who pay taxes cannot afford to continue to spend more and receive less.

The primary focus of the Newman government is to deliver quality services to Queenslanders at a price they can afford. We are implementing our plan to ensure that everyday services which Queenslanders and Queensland families rely on, such as public transport, health, education and law and order, are the best that they can be. In terms of public transport, the commission found Queensland Rail delivers considerably less value per dollar of government subsidy than comparable operators. Over the past decade the subsidy per passenger journey has increased by almost 100 per cent from \$8.50 to \$16.75 per journey. Under the current arrangements there is no incentive to improve services, to increase efficiency or to reduce costs. If we improve the efficiency through the investigation of contestability then more services can be provided and at a lower cost to Queenslanders. We all know what Labor had planned—15 per cent fare increases with no regard for the cost-of-living pressures on ordinary Queensland families. Already the Newman government has halved Labor's planned 15 per cent fare increases for 2013 and 2014. As the government's plan sets out, this is just the start. We are committed to improving the reliability, frequency and affordability of the transport network.

An examination of health services showed that the cost for public hospitals in Queensland was 11 per cent higher than the national efficient price and that Queensland is also the most expensive provider of health services to admitted patients of all the mainland states. Queenslanders pay more but under Labor were getting less. This government would not be doing the right thing by Queenslanders if we did not look to improve the delivery of these services so that we can give Queenslanders access to better and more health services. In this regard I acknowledge the work already undertaken by the Health minister and the outcomes achieved to date, including the establishment of the hospital and health services boards and the dramatic reduction in ambulance ramping at the state's major hospitals. Ramping reduced by 95 per cent within three months of introducing the changes.

For education the commission has shown that the proportion of Queensland students meeting or exceeding national minimum standards was generally lower than that of New South Wales, Victoria and the national average—lower. This outcome is unacceptable and the Newman government is committed to ensuring that the outcomes achieved by Queensland schools are amongst the best in the nation. The Newman government accepts the Commission of Audit's recommendations and sees significant opportunity for improving the performance of Queensland schools through strategies such as rewarding high performing teachers, quality mentoring for new teachers, rigorous performance evaluation measures, improving school discipline, strengthening school autonomy through greater financial management responsibility and quality reporting for parents—people being told how their kids are going. These strategies are adopted amongst some of the best-performing education systems in the world.

Better public transport, better health services, better education: that is the best thing we can do to serve Queenslanders and their families. This government is here to serve Queenslanders, not run a protection racket for unions or Labor mates. Under the Newman government and with our plan for better services for Queensland, Queensland will be a great state with great opportunity.