




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Sale of Public Assets

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (11.20 am): The con job from the LNP on asset sales has begun in earnest. The Premier and the Treasurer like to pretend that they have not made up their minds on asset sales, but Queenslanders know the truth. They know that the Premier and the Treasurer are both fully invested in this course of action. Their rhetoric around considering ‘choices’ yet then saying they do not have any other choice apart from asset sales shows that the LNP is not listening to people in this state.

It is clear that, after not quite two years in the job, this Treasurer has run out of ideas. It is clear that the federal Liberal Party and global investment banks are the ones running economic and fiscal policy here in Queensland and they are doing it at the expense of the views of everyday Queenslanders, who have spoken long and loud about their desire to keep public assets in public hands. The people I speak to—and I suspect many people to whom those opposite speak—have not changed their minds. They are asking why the LNP said before the last election that they had a plan to pay down debt that did not involve asset sales yet are now going back on their word. They are asking why the Premier compares our state to Spain and the Treasurer says that we are going broke—making outlandish statements like this—and then they go on taxpayer funded trade missions and say the exact opposite to people overseas. They are asking why millions of dollars are being spent on scoping studies for asset sales, lining the pockets of global investment bankers, while their electricity bills are going through the roof. The LNP knows that it should be listening to the people of Queensland, yet it has clearly chosen not to.

At least the \$20,000-a-month taxpayer funded spin doctors, who were hired to spin the government’s message, know it. They told the Premier that someone needs to ‘at least pretend they are listening’ before the inevitable sell-off is announced. That is why the Premier pushed the Treasurer out the door of the bankers’ boardrooms in Eagle Street and sent him off to a few places in regional Queensland on a so-called listening tour. How did these meetings play out? Firstly, they were invite only. That is right: the Treasurer says, ‘Let’s go and consult and listen,’ and then he draws up his own attendee list and locks the doors. If you are supposed to be listening, why would you close the door to everyday Queenslanders and refuse their attendance at these meetings? How can you call an invite-only process genuine consultation? You cannot because it is not. If it were genuine consultation, Queensland residents and families would be invited to attend. Sadly, only those on the Treasurer’s rolodex will get to go through the door.

Where were the families who question what kind of future their kids will have if the LNP sells off everything they can get their hands on? They were locked out, shut out and completely disregarded by this LNP government. What was discussed in these meetings? According to the Treasurer, he delivered his spin about the state’s finances, neglecting to mention the \$14.6 billion in debt that he has added in just two years. That is over \$830,000 worth of extra debt added by the member for

Clayfield every single hour that he has had control of the purse strings. He also did not tell them about the dog's breakfast that is his management of the 1 William Street project, where \$2.6 billion is being wasted on the Premier's personal skyscraper. Of course, the Treasurer does not mind running the gauntlet on that project. After all, he firmly believes that he will be occupying the top floor of that building once Santo's boys gives the current Premier the chop. He also would not have told them about the \$100,000 wasted on the Attorney-General's royal birth certificates. This is, of course, small change compared to the waste on the Premier's skyscraper, but it is instructive of how the government campaigns against wasting money while throwing billions away on their pet projects.

So once he delivers the spin typed out for him by the \$20,000-a-month taxpayer funded PR consultants, what does he do? He asks those present to give him the answers. He tells them that, if they want to pay down debt, they should tell him what needs to happen. There is no wonder his backbench colleagues, especially the member for Moggill, think the member for Clayfield is the laziest Treasurer in Queensland's history. According to the Treasurer, what was the response from his invite-only guests when presented with his doom and gloom scenario? They agreed with him of course. Asset sales it is, according to the Treasurer. What a shock! What a surprise! A remarkably different outcome from what everyone expected! Now we hear the federal Treasurer setting deadlines for the states to sell off as many assets as possible and pretending there is some financial benefit. Let us be clear about what this will mean. The federal Treasurer's proposal would see profits from these businesses go to the private sector and any financial returns to Queensland equalised away through the GST process. That means no gains for Queensland whatsoever. We would lose our assets, we would lose our profits and we would lose GST payments.

The Newman government is working with the Abbott government to pull the wool over the eyes of Queenslanders and sell off our assets. First they had Peter Costello saying, 'The devil told me to do it,' and now they have Treasurer Joe Hockey wielding his almighty power as federal Treasurer telling them, 'Do it or you don't get anything off us as a federal government.'

The Labor Party has listened to Queenslanders. A message was sent very clearly to all politicians at the last election—not just to the Labor Party—that Queenslanders do not want publicly owned assets sold. I say to all the cannon fodder, which is exactly how they are treating them: you are going to bear the brunt of these decisions at the next election. Quite simply, they can either stand by and keep drinking the Kool-Aid or get on board, show some gumption and run against their own mob.