



Speech By  
**Curtis Pitt**


**MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 25 November 2014

**MOTION**

**Newman Government, Performance**

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (5.55 pm): There is no denying that the Newman government's reckless slash-and-burn approach has slowed Queensland's economy and increased unemployment. Back in 2012, the Premier was bizarrely claiming that he had saved 6,000 jobs by only axing 14,000 government workers instead of 20,000. However, it has since been revealed that this government has cut more than 24,000 workers, when workers in government owned businesses are included.

There are numerous independent assessments that confirm that this Newman LNP government has slowed our economy. In 2012 the Commonwealth Bank economics team said that the Newman government's cuts 'will weigh on the Queensland economy over the coming financial years and beyond'. Deloitte Access Economics said that the Newman government's cuts were 'a major negative for the state's growth last financial year'. I think the Premier would say, 'Cue scary music.' Deloitte went further to say that this government 'overdid it, leaving their austerity weighing on economic growth'.

The Premier's favourite economists at CommSec also said that the Queensland government 'had a significant amount of lay-offs in the public sector and that's having an impact to some degree in curbing the retail story'. Queensland's retail trade result in September was the weakest of any state in Australia. The Australian National Accounts for 2013-14 released last week detail that Queensland recorded growth of 2.3 per cent last financial year—nearly half the growth of four per cent inherited from the previous Labor government. This growth is both below the national average and below the historical average for Queensland.

When looking at domestic spending or 'state final demand', the figures are even worse, with Queensland recording the second weakest result in the nation last financial year. The national accounts further detail that Queensland recorded the largest fall of any state in gross state income per person last financial year. Over the year to June we have seen business investment fall by 12.4 per cent and private investment fall by 7.5 per cent, compared with growth in business investment of 32 per cent under Labor and private investment of 23 per cent over the year to March 2012.

This slowing of the Queensland economy under the Newman LNP government has had a devastating effect on jobs. Queensland now has the highest unemployment rate in Australia at seven per cent seasonally adjusted. On either measure—trend or seasonally adjusted—unemployment is at an 11-year high in this state. And on either measure the number of unemployed in Queensland in October is the highest on record in the ABS series dating back to February 1978. There are currently 175,600 unemployed Queenslanders—that is another 41,800 Queenslanders in the unemployment queue since the election.

The Treasurer in opposition used to obsess over full-time jobs, calling them 'breadwinners'. Yet under his watch, on a seasonally adjusted basis, more than 20,000 full-time jobs have been destroyed since the election. Even on the Treasurer's sometimes preferred trend measure, there are 18,600 fewer full-time jobs than at the election. Of course when the previous Labor government supported the creation of more than 53,000 full-time jobs, with the economy growing at four per cent, this Treasurer was calling the economy a 'basket case'.

Young people in my region have been hit particularly hard by this government's reckless slash-and-burn approach, with youth unemployment in the Far North skyrocketing from 11 per cent to more than 20 per cent. This means that one in five people aged 15 to 24 in my region are unable to find any work. This is not a record to be proud of and this is certainly not an economy back on track. And we have a youth unemployment crisis in other parts of the state, with Ipswich's rate increasing from 12 per cent to over 19 per cent, and Moreton Bay North from 10.5 per cent at the election to over 18 per cent in October. So much for the Premier's promise to lower unemployment to four per cent. Instead we have nation-leading unemployment of seven per cent—up from 5.5 per cent at the election. And, when it comes to the Premier's contract with Queenslanders, all we see is a litany of other failures and an F for 'fail'.

Instead of delivering a saving in the cost of living of \$250 to \$330 per household, all we have seen are increases in taxes and charges. Taxes per person have increased by \$330 under this government, including a \$1.2 billion hike on insurance duty and the emergency management, fire and rescue levy. Electricity prices have increased by more than \$440 a year on average, with Queenslanders being stung last financial year with the largest average increase in power prices on record. Before the election the Premier said he could control power prices and he said Queenslanders should take their bills to the ballot box. This is despite the power price increases under this term of government being far higher than the last. Now the Premier has deregulated electricity prices in South-East Queensland, saying the market should determine them and he cannot control them.

To make things even worse, the Premier is planning to sell every government owned electricity asset in this state—electricity network assets the Premier previously described as 'monopoly' assets. We all know what that means in private hands with a profit motive; it means price gouging. These asset sales will tax Queenslanders twice, through both higher prices as private companies seek profits and lost returns from government owned businesses.

On election day, whenever it is to come, I urge Queenslanders to take their electricity bill as their chosen form of voter ID to send this arrogant and out-of-touch Newman government a message.

*(Time expired)*