




Speech By
Michael Crandon

MEMBER FOR COOMERA

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MOTION: FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, BUDGET

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (6.13 pm): I rise to support the Treasurer's amendment to the motion. The Treasurer and other speakers from this side of the House have talked about strong choices. Let us ask the question again: why do we need strong choices? In answering, again I remind those opposite that in an incoming government brief independent officers of Treasury stated—

Queensland's fiscal position and outlook is unsustainable and restoration must be an urgent priority for this term of government. I repeat, 'an urgent priority for this term'. Among other things, the Queensland Treasury Corporation said—

The state's debt has reached unprecedented levels ... Queensland is now in uncharted waters with respect to the volume of debt on issue and the resultant interest bill.

How much is it? By 2014-15 it will be \$80 billion. In 2011-12, the then Auditor-General, Glenn Poole, an appointee of the then Labor government, said in his report words to the effect that the borrowings have grown by almost 340 per cent between 2008 and 2012 and, as a result, that has increased risks to the long-term financial sustainability of the state. He said that Labor's own figures saw debt reaching \$85.4 billion by this coming financial year and, as a result, interest costs to service Labor's debt were the fastest growing expense of the Queensland government. All of those words were spoken by Glenn Poole, who was appointed by those opposite.

Labor had no plan for the future and, as a result, Queensland lost its AAA credit rating which meant higher interest rates on the debt. How much more? Around \$100 million per annum. That money could have built three new schools every year. The fact that higher interest rates was a big deal was acknowledged by the current shadow Treasurer when he said—

The credit rating is a big deal because it determines how much interest is paid on loans.

If Labor had a real plan, we could have retained our AAA credit rating. Instead, all we saw from Labor was waste, waste and more waste, cost blow-outs, bungling and mismanagement, including that of the health payroll system which is expected to cost somewhere in the order of \$1.2 billion. That would be enough to build a new hospital in Coomera, adjacent to the railway station and near the Coomera Town Centre. The desalination plant cost \$1 billion-plus. I would only need half of that to duplicate exit 54 and build two further exits, exit 54 north and exit 54 south, and the roads to connect all three to the Coomera Town Centre and the new hospital.

The waste goes on and on. I would dearly love the \$680,000 spent to build a sculpture somewhere along a 50-kilometre national park walking track that few people will ever see. And do not start me on the \$1,000 toilet seat lid for the office loo of former environment minister Vicky Darling. I will never forget the comment by a previous government minister when he was quizzed by a reporter about the \$35 million that Anna Bligh wrote off on a failed alternative energy project. He said words to the effect, 'We haven't lost it; it was government money'. He missed the point. He was a minister in

the previous Labor government. Labor just borrowed and kept borrowing so, yes, strong choices are needed.

Unlike Labor, the Newman government has a plan. Why? Because we have to build the social and economic infrastructure for Queenslanders: roads all around Queensland, as well as in Coomera; schools such as the three new schools in my electorate and the fourth that is under construction right now; and passenger railway infrastructure all over South-East Queensland. Some of that cannot be done right now, because we have to deal with Labor's \$80 billion debt that was accumulated over the past 10 years that it was in office.

A government member: How much was it?

Mr CRANDON: Eighty billion dollars. Strong choices are necessary because we have a \$4 billion interest burden on that \$80 billion of debt, which is a debt for all Queenslanders to share. That is around \$15,000 of debt for every man, woman and child in Queensland. A family of four carries \$60,000 and their share of the interest is \$3,000. A short while ago I was talking to a constituent whom I will call Ken, because that is his name. He could not believe the numbers that I was telling him. After our conversation he said, 'What do you think the ALP would have done if they had stayed in government?' Then he answered his own question. He said, 'They'd probably have kept on spending'.

This government has a plan. That government did not have a plan. They got us into the doldrums. This government will get us out with strong choices.