




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Record of Proceedings, 2 April 2014

ADJOURNMENT

Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (9.12 pm): I wish to speak about the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal findings that have resulted in massive pay increases to members of parliament—so massive the average person would not even earn in one year what some MPs received in this pay increase. This could not come at a worse time for the people of Queensland.

On 24 June 2012, right from the outset of his term, the Premier told the people of Queensland, 'Just like your family budget, we need to tighten our belt and find ways to cut our spending.' From the moment they were elected, this government embarked on a slash-and-destroy program terminating 14,000 public servant positions, cutting services to pensioners and people with disabilities, and removing health services from rural and regional areas, amongst other things—all in the name of Queensland's dire financial position. Our rural fires were told that they would lose funding, and staff and residents and small businesses were slogged with massive levy hikes which do not even go to local units but are fed back into consolidated revenue—all in the name of Queensland's dire financial position.

Now, the Treasurer is uniting with a federal Liberal government to convince Queenslanders that the government has no choice but to select which assets they will sell—all in the name of Queensland's dire financial position. When this slash-and-burn approach was criticised both in the House and in the media, the Premier and his cabinet consistently painted a doom-and-gloom picture of Queensland's economy and said that they had no other option but to sack Queenslanders, remove services from the bush and take lawn-mowing vouchers away from the elderly and disabled.

When the issue of MP pay increases came up last year, the government accepted it rapidly without question or consideration of the implications for the rest of Queensland. They were hoping no-one would notice, but people did and their response was understandable outrage. So the Premier set up an independent tribunal to assess remuneration for parliamentarians. At the time I had legislation drafted that linked MP wages to Public Service certified agreements under the Industrial Relations Act 1999, because I could not see why the police, ambos, fires, nurses and employees in the Public Service should get a two per cent pay increase and politicians a 40 per cent increase. MPs are public servants. Queenslanders should not have to fork out for an independent tribunal when there is already a body that determines public servant award wages.

Queenslanders are fed up with politicians putting their snouts in the trough while they lecture from on high that everyone else should tighten their belts and make sacrifices because of decisions made by politicians. This government has smashed through bill after bill, bypassing the parliamentary process again and again. I find it unbelievable that the Premier expects us to believe that he cannot exercise executive powers to reject this pay increase when to do so is in the best interest of Queenslanders.

(Time expired)