



Speech By  
**Hon. Tim Nicholls**


**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 6 May 2014

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Strong Choices Campaign**

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.48 am): Queenslanders have shown that they are deeply interested in discussing ways to pay down our \$80 billion debt which has been accumulated over the last 10 years. The Strong Choices campaign has given all Queenslanders an unprecedented opportunity to have their say on an unprecedented problem. Tens of thousands have taken the chance to tell us how they would reduce the debt so the government can reduce its \$450,000 an hour interest bill and securely fund our future.

The Strong Choices website has received more than 179,000 unique visits and has had 850,000 page views. More than 40,000 Queenslanders have worked their way through the People's Budget tool and completed a submission. The People's Budget tool has helped Queenslanders get a thorough understanding of the options we face as we seek to pay down debt—we can either significantly increase taxes, reduce services or sell or lease some assets.

I know those opposite want us to have patience, wait for the debt to fix itself, have a cup of tea, a Bex and a good lie down, and the solution will roll across the horizon and save us all. They do not have a solution to grow our economy or secure the future of Queenslanders for generations to come or to provide jobs for Queenslanders. As a government, we want to be able to invest in the infrastructure to support a growing economy because that will deliver Queenslanders more jobs and greater prosperity, but the truth is we cannot make the necessary investment in that infrastructure while we are constrained by a \$4 billion interest bill each and every year.

From today all Queenslanders will be able to clearly see how as a state we compare to other states in Australia. The Strong Choices website will display a debt counter which will display the state's debt while on the website. If you like, it is the per second impact of Labor's debt. The site will also contain the state's total debt, the state's interest bill and the state's per person debt compared to other Australian states—a virtual cornucopia of information to understand the full impact of Labor's \$80 billion worth of debt. This is yet another step towards helping Queenslanders understand the unprecedented problem we inherited from Labor, a problem we have been dealing with in a planned and methodical way since we first read the incoming government briefs the day after we were elected.

In the months since we were last here, more than \$350 million has been paid out in interest on Labor's debt. That is \$350 million that we cannot invest in infrastructure we know the state is going to need. This government believes that this is too much dead money, that \$350 million over that month is too much money wasted and that action must be taken to reduce Labor's \$80 billion worth of debt and the resultant interest bill. That is why we are talking to all Queenslanders about the strong choices we face. I encourage any Queenslanders who want to have their say to visit the Strong Choices website and make a submission to government so we understand their priorities as we look to fix the accumulated Labor debt over the last decade and build a great state with great opportunity.