




Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 20 May 2014

MOTION: UNEMPLOYMENT

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (5.45 pm): Thank you—

Mr Minnikin: Great speech.

Mr NICHOLLS: I have only just started, but I appreciate it. I thank the member for Chatsworth very much. I move—

That all words after 'House' be deleted and the following words inserted—

- notes that more jobs have been created in Queensland than any other state over the last 12 months;
- notes that for the year to April 2014 more than half the jobs created nationally were created in Queensland, on both trend and seasonally adjusted terms;
- notes that only this can-do government has a strong plan to address long-term youth unemployment; and
- supports this government's strong plan for a brighter future—a plan to grow a four-pillar economy to support jobs growth in Queensland.

I want to reflect a little on what we have heard from those opposite and reflect on their record. If there was one thing that was startlingly absent from their comments tonight it was a reflection of their own record in this place and here in Queensland. Let us have a look at what those opposite achieved when they were in government, because that goes to the heart of their credibility, if there is any that they have left on this issue.

What was their record? Under those opposite, Queensland consistently had the worst unemployment rate in mainland Australia. In fact, under Labor, Queensland had the dubious honour of having the highest unemployment rate on mainland Australia in seven of the last 12 months of the Labor government. In five of those months, we had the highest unemployment rate not just in mainland Australia but in all of Australia. They beat South Australia, they beat Tasmania, they beat the Northern Territory. Under this LNP government, not once has Queensland ever had the highest unemployment rate in the country.

The Labor opposition record is one of broken promises. We remember the promise of 100,000 jobs for 100,000 breadwinners. Was that ever delivered? No. They made that commitment and backed away from it as soon as they were re-elected—just like their commitment to keep a fuel levy, just like their commitment not to sell assets. As soon as they were re-elected they backed away from it. Despite their attempts to reach their goal through an unsustainable increase in the Queensland Public Service, they could not live up to their own promises. That saw them run fiscal deficits of \$29 billion over six years from 2006 to 2012—\$29 billion that Queenslanders now have to make a strong choice about how they pay it down. Notwithstanding the fact that they employed an extra 60,000 people in the Queensland Public Service, Labor could not do it. I ask my colleagues to think about that. Under Labor, the Queensland Public Service went from about 140,000 people in June 2000 to over 200,000 in 2011—an extra 60,000 people. That was pump priming by the good old dead hand of the socialists over there who think that the only job is a job that the taxpayers are paying for.

As Margaret Thatcher famously said, the only problem with socialism is that one day you run out of other people's money. That is what happened to them.

Not only that, Labor presided over the largest leap in unemployment. It went up by 1.8 per cent after the years of the Howard-Costello government, where the rate went down to 3.7 per cent. As soon as the government changed—

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: Be quiet! You just don't listen—sorry, Madam Speaker, the member for Mulgrave. These are the facts: 3.7 per cent at the end of the Howard-Costello government. As soon as Labor came in federally, what did it lead to? It led to 5.5 per cent, the highest rate in mainland Australia at a time when Queensland had the best terms of trade it had experienced. What have we achieved? Employment in Queensland has grown by 60,000 people and, seasonally adjusted, jobs growth has been 64,000 people. More than half of all the jobs created in Australia in the last 12 months, using both seasonally and trend adjusted measures, were generated right here in Queensland. We have had 12 consecutive months of employment growth and the figures last month represented the fastest monthly growth in employment in four years.

Queensland's participation rate is higher and we are providing more jobs. If there is one friend of the worker in Queensland, if there is one party that stands up for workers in Queensland, it is the LNP. We are growing the economy, we are providing jobs, we are looking after workers. The best thing you can do for workers is give them a long-term, sustainable job.