




Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Strong Choices

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.45 am): Madam Speaker, this government is absolutely focused on delivering for vulnerable Queenslanders. We are doing this in a number of ways: we are revitalising front-line services; we are keenly focused on doing what we can to put downward pressure on the cost of living; and we are working every day to grow the Queensland economy. While we are proud of our achievements thus far, we know that there is much more work to do.

Population projections show us that, in the next 20 years Queensland's population will expand by 2.5 million people, there will be 400,000 more children who will need to be educated and there will be 650,000 more people over the age of 65 who will require medical and health services. To maintain our current standard of living and to prepare for the needs of our growing state, Queensland will need new schools, new hospitals and better roads and infrastructure, but we are being held back by the \$80 billion black cloud of Labor debt which hangs over the future of this state and inhibits our ability to invest in the infrastructure that we know a growing state is going to need.

Unlike those opposite, we have a plan to pay down that debt and to securely invest in the infrastructure that we know we are going to need in the future. We are taking that plan to the people of Queensland at the next election. Make no mistake, Madam Speaker: under our plan we will be delivering for Queensland's most vulnerable citizens. Our \$3.4 billion Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund will put real downward pressure on electricity prices. If given a mandate to act on our asset leasing plan, we can take six per cent off retail electricity prices in 2015-16. This policy will help to stimulate the economy and it will provide relief to Queensland families who are doing it tough. Just as importantly, the Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund will also help generate about 8,600 new full-time equivalent jobs here in Queensland.

The \$8.6 billion Strong Choices Future Investment Program also has the potential to transform our state. It will mean better roads and schools and it will improve our hospitals, particularly in regional communities as I detailed to the House yesterday. It will lead to better services for Queensland's most vulnerable citizens, and it will stimulate growth in many regional communities. It will also generate up to 25,000 new jobs in job-creating infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, only the LNP has a plan to provide for the growth we know is just around the corner and to provide Queenslanders with the schools, hospitals and transport infrastructure that we know the state is going to need. Our positive plan will put downward pressure on the cost of living for vulnerable families and create up to 33,600 new jobs. It will strengthen the Queensland economy, providing more opportunities for all Queenslanders, especially those most vulnerable.