




Speech By  
**Hon. Curtis Pitt**

**MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 May 2015

**MOTION: STATE FINANCES**

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (6.26 pm): I am glad we finally heard the words fiscal repair used sometime in that diatribe by the member opposite because frankly, Mr Speaker, he coined the phrase. Fiscal repair task was introduced into the lexicon of conversation here in Queensland in his first budget in 2012, which was the same budget that he outsourced to Peter Costello. What we are hearing tonight with the tabling of the document—and we have heard it from the member for Stafford, the Minister for State Development—is three years too late. If they were serious about being open and accountable, they would have done it at that stage.

They are being absolutely hypocritical when it comes to these matters. Timing is clearly absolutely everything in politics. What we know is that the member for Clayfield woke up on Saturday morning, 31 January, expecting Campbell Newman to lose his seat and expecting to be the Premier that night. It did not quite work out, and now he is upset because he is not the shadow Treasurer. So he has not had a good couple of months, and very clearly this is not where he wants to be. The LNP's hypocrisy is beyond belief. They did everything they could while in government to avoid scrutiny. When the LNP came into government they delayed the budget until September. They scrapped the annual economic review. They hid reporting on the Queensland state accounts when the economy was tanking under their mismanagement, and that is the most important point. Today we are releasing the state accounts—which is something that they failed to do because they did not want scrutiny—and we are being up-front with Queenslanders about the situation. The most disappointing thing is that over their entire time in government they have not been up-front at all. Now that they are in opposition they are being holier than thou on how information is treated and who should be given what and at what time. It is absolute hypocrisy.

They only released fiscal tables and state accounts on the Treasury website because we badgered them about it for so long. They finally did it at a time of their choosing and tried to hide it. We are being up-front with Queenslanders and telling people about this right up-front, and that is what should be happening. Frankly, they have had their go; we can have our go now. We have heard from them today.

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

**Mr PITT:** You are back in your seat. That is very good, member for Clayfield. Mr Speaker, I will return to the motion. At least I will deal with it in the first two minutes rather than the last 30 seconds. We know that the words 'fiscal repair task' were a product of the member for Clayfield. It is an expression that he used. It must have focus group tested well. The advice is that there is no incoming government brief called fiscal repair task.

Under the guise of fiscal repair the member for Clayfield set up special units within Treasury that were each designed to sack public servants. That is what the fiscal repair task meant to those opposite. It was all about employee expenses growth being limited. That was code for sacking—and this from the same people who said that public servants had nothing to fear!

I have been accused of a few things before but to be accused by those opposite of talking down the Queensland economy when presenting the facts about what is happening in Queensland is absolutely amazing. This is from those opposite, led in government by Campbell Newman, who compared Queensland to Spain. He said that Queensland was the Spain of Australian states. If that is not talking down the Queensland economy I do not know what is. Then he said that we were on a power dive into the abyss. All of this had nothing to do with anything except a narrative to destroy the Labor Party's credibility. That is clearly what they aimed to do and they failed, because people have recognised that they did not take the advice they should have taken.

It should come as no surprise to those opposite that the independent Treasury does provide incoming government briefs, and of course they do provide comprehensive advice about a range of things including Queensland's fiscal challenges. I remind those opposite that the challenges we face are those they left for us. Our challenges are their challenges. Frankly, today I had to make people aware that the reason they were feeling so bad over the past year, in 2014, related to mismanagement and other factors. We have been up-front about that. If those opposite cared to listen today they would have got it.

There is a longstanding precedent that incoming government briefs are cabinet-in-confidence. It is a privilege that is attached to these cabinet documents that allows governments to make decisions. It is not dissimilar to the privilege we as members of parliament have in terms of what we have in our electorate offices. Frankly, do you expect us to release everything that comes into our electorate offices? We have to make decisions and that is how it is done.

In 2012 the member for Clayfield was keen to use the precedent of not releasing sensitive government information yet tonight he wants us to release it, egging on the member for Surfers Paradise. It is very, very sad. What we know is that hypocrisy is what the LNP stands for. Very sadly, that is why we see the current situation of LNP members sitting in opposition, talking about a plan that Queenslanders rejected.