




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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MOTION OF CONFIDENCE

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (12.29 pm): I wish to congratulate the Premier on her appointment and you, Mr Speaker. However, I have no confidence in this government and this morning I have heard nothing from the Labor members opposite that would lead me to believe that they have learnt anything from their time in opposition. This Labor minority government is simply repeating the script from where we have been before in Queensland. It is a matter of history that the LNP opposition, having won 51 out of 89 of the primary votes, did not win the majority of seats. We did not win. There are many lessons to learn from that. While we did make mistakes, many things were done that were very good for Queensland. We need to know those things that Queenslanders have talked to us about and wanted us to hear, and not just throw the baby out with the bathwater. For example, yesterday Kay came into my office and said that if it had not been for the change from the ALP government to the LNP government she would not have received a cataract operation in February of this year and a right hip replacement late last year. She was very happy about that.

As we know, in the past Labor's track record showed that it did not keep figures, because if you keep the figures they might be leaked. When Paul Lucas was health minister, even his correspondence register was leaked because he did not cover the briefs and he did not want to know what was going on. Consequently, they did not collate the actual health figures because they thought they might be leaked and they would face embarrassment. They did not see those figures as tools to be used to deliver better health outcomes. And there have been better health outcomes, such as evidenced by Kay's story, in my electorate and in every electorate in Queensland.

In Queensland I saw a situation where people had to wait years for access to dental health in the public sector. Now, we have a situation where those long waits have been wiped out, thanks to an LNP government. Once again, constituents who knew what it was like under the previous Labor government have come to me to tell their stories. They have not forgotten, but we see a case of amnesia within this Labor government. They have not learnt that simply throwing money at things is not innovation. People need a government that cares about competent service delivery. They need a government to effectively and efficiently take their taxpayer dollars and better use them for the sake of their care. Nothing we have heard from Labor is about real targets and how they are going to address surgery; we have just heard 'surgery on the truth'.

Yet again the debt deniers are back in charge of the Queensland government. They are in denial about their economic record and the legacy of debt that could not be wiped out in a term. They are in denial about the fact that the economy of Queensland needs this to be tackled. On seizing the keys to the Executive Building and the treasury benches, the first thing we saw them do was engage in revisionism; a rewriting of history. ALP amnesia is convenient, but it is not truthful.

This morning what I have heard from Labor indicates that they are making it up as they go along. They did not expect to win government and they did not really have plans, so now they have to make them up and hope that they can cobble something together. They have no plans for the prosperity of Queensland. They have no effective and sustainable plans to allow the businesses of Queensland to create jobs, because it is business that creates the jobs in Queensland.

When they self-profess their honesty and integrity, I am reminded of the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson who said, 'The louder he talked of his honor, the faster we counted our spoons.' I have heard Labor members tell us how honest they are and how much integrity they have, yet there is no honesty and integrity when you do not tackle truthfully the challenges of Queensland with a real plan that will make a difference. I believe that it is intergenerational theft, burglary and corporate fraud to give the people of Queensland the debt that Labor gave us without an honest plan to tackle it.

A number of years ago in this parliament, I rose and asked a question of the then transport minister, Rachel Nolan, about Labor's asset sale plans for Queensland Rail, which had not been announced at that point. When I asked her the question, she said, 'Queensland Rail is not for sale.' I heard abuse from Labor members, some of whom are opposite me now. It was interesting that within about four days of that pronouncement here in this chamber that Labor would not sell Queensland Rail we started to hear confirmation of what I had heard, which was that they were, in fact, planning to sell Queensland Rail. The difference between our side of politics and theirs is that when we went to the election we were honest with people about asset leases and we were honest about what our plan was. In contrast, Labor had no plan. However, history shows and their track record is that they lied and misled the people of Queensland about their plan for asset sales. They just did not tell people; they did not take it to the electorate to seek a mandate.

I have no confidence in the Labor Party to govern well and competently or to build the economy of Queensland, because its track record is being repeated in the language we are hearing here today. They have never apologised for their maladministration of Queensland's economy and resources, which hurt ordinary Queenslanders, such as the ones I referred to before. They have never apologised for the fake Tahitian prince being able to rip money out of the health system, defrauding Health. You have to get it into your head, Mr Speaker, that, if the Labor government are so incompetent as to engage in maladministration, that is corporate fraud and the ones who pay the price are ordinary Queenslanders, who faced higher taxes under the Labor government. They have never apologised for the hike in transport fees, which occurred under the now Premier of Queensland when she was transport minister. They have never taken responsibility for losing the AAA rating, which I believe equates to about \$4 billion in extra interest payments that Queenslanders have to pay because of the corporate fraud of previous Labor administrations and what they did to rack up an unsustainable level of debt. They have never apologised for misleading Queenslanders by telling them they would not sell assets and then going ahead and doing it.

This is a new minority Labor government, but it is old Labor in the way that it has come to the table. Within a matter of weeks, we have seen their election commitments, scanty as they were, in tatters as it has been revealed that \$150 million of savings that they had hoped to take out of the electricity sector with mergers is being quite widely criticised by the ACCC because it would lead to a greater concentration in the electricity market. That plan has been criticised by the ACCC, which has said that it is anticompetitive, and it has been criticised widely in the business sector as well. There is no acknowledgement that they did not have a plan. They are debt deniers and they are deniers of the economic reality.

Mr Springborg: Now they're attacking the ACCC, the independent umpire.

Ms SIMPSON: Next they will be attacking the ratings agency. Who will be next? They will say that others do not know what they are talking about and that only the fiscal geniuses opposite know how to run things, until those who actually set the credit ratings of this globe come back and provide a blowtorch to scrutiny. The only offering we have heard of is the old magic pudding, where more money is spent than is made. However, we have listened to the people of Queensland and we recognise that Queensland needed change and that how you bring people with you is important. Queensland does need change. We cannot go back to the bad old days of the blowouts in waiting lists which we saw under Labor—to a time when they did not keep the figures because they wanted to deny that there was a problem. They never actually had good administration in place and they did not use the tools to bring it about.

Those opposite never acknowledged or apologised for the backlog of maintenance in our schools. We all should know—well, you should know, Mr Speaker—about the peeling paint, about the leaking roofs, about the damage to walls in our schools that was never fixed. This basic maintenance and the backlog were addressed by the LNP government. To me this is another example of good administration in the hands of those who know what matters. We put those decisions back into the hands of local principals and schools rather than holding on to the old way of doing things which was a centralised bureaucracy for the maintenance program which was inefficiently handled by Labor. We wanted to give that power back to schools. It is not only about consultation but also about delegation to those at the local level who have the ability to do the job. That is what we did.

I want to talk about my shadow portfolio area of roads. We were delivering major road projects to cut congestion, improve reliability and boost economic productivity. What is this Labor minority government's plan? It is an infrastructure freeze for 12 months or for however long. Who knows how long it will go on for? They are still trying to work out their plan.

We worked with the federal government to invest \$8.5 billion—

Government members interjected.

Ms SIMPSON: The behaviour of those opposite has not changed. We worked with the federal government to invest \$8.5 billion to improve flood mitigation, safety and capacity on the Bruce Highway. Some of the major projects included the upgrade at Yeppen South near Rockhampton and the upgrade of the Cooroy to Curra section of the Bruce Highway. We were able to work with the federal government to get on with the job of delivering the Toowoomba second range crossing. We are very proud of that achievement. This will ensure that not only will local residents have a better road but also the important logistic chain will be maintained. Labor had spoken about this for two decades but had never been able to deliver it. Under the LNP and a federal coalition government we were able to prove that this project can happen. The \$1.6 billion second range crossing will result in 1,800 jobs during construction. Modelling shows that over the next 30 years the Toowoomba second range crossing will increase productivity by \$2.5 billion in the Toowoomba region alone.

We worked with the federal government to deliver a \$625 million upgrade package for the Warrego Highway west of Toowoomba. I remember years ago doing a truck run. I think they thought my ears were a bit delicate so they turned the radio down so I did not hear all the banter. I thought it was a bit quiet. It was so rough on that highway that even if the radio were on my teeth were chattering so loudly that I would not have heard it anyway. I am very proud of the fact that it was an LNP government that put money into this road and got on with the job of recognising that the roads in both South-East Queensland and regional Queensland are important.

We also worked with the federal government to deliver a package of works valued at \$250 million across Cape York Peninsula. We again partnered with our federal colleagues to secure \$1.5 billion for the Gateway upgrade north to provide two additional lanes between Nudgee and the Deagon Deviation to alleviate congestion and to make sure hardworking mums and dads spend less time in traffic and more time at home with their families. We provided \$350 million for the Queensland Road Safety Action Plan between 2013 and 2015. This plan improves infrastructure, manages speed and ensures vehicle and driver safety.

The LNP also made it safer for kids travelling to and from school. I am very proud of the wonderful policy—I had quite a lot of involvement in the formulation of it—which saw the delivery of 300 flashing school lights over four years. Drivers had no excuse but to slow down when in school zones. By June of this year 350 flashing school lights will have been installed. That is more than we promised and one year ahead of schedule. Not only did we make significant improvements to our road network; we also cut the cost of living and reduced red tape for everyday Queenslanders. An example is the freezing of vehicle registration.

The list goes on in respect of local government, community recovery and resilience. We worked with the federal government to deliver the \$80 million Betterment Fund so local councils could undertake projects to improve disaster resilience. I wish at this point to acknowledge the communities of Queensland that have recently been through yet more devastating cyclones. We have to admire the resilience of our communities. It is often tougher for people after they come through devastating events to get back to the reality of life, deal with the financial impacts and rebuild their lives, their businesses and literally their homes. At this time we stand with them and support any effort to enable them to get on with their lives.

In 2014-15 the state budget allocated more than a billion dollars for local councils. Local councils are the local decision-makers; local communities in action. With respect to community recovery and resilience, it is very impressive to see well-run committees and well-run networks delivering local responses to local issues.

Last year more than \$8.7 million was spent on infrastructure projects. There was \$2 million for the Get Ready Queensland disaster preparedness program, \$2 million to combat graffiti and \$2 million in grants to show societies.

There were many road funding commitments put forward that were not funded by Strong Choices. I would certainly be very disappointed if this government unwound the very necessary roadworks that we worked hard to ensure met the needs of communities. The road funding commitments that were not funded from Strong Choices were works such as the exit 54 upgrade worth \$47.4 million. That community needs that upgrade. It is imperative and will unlock the economic

potential in that area. There was also funding for the study of the Bill Fulton Bridge upgrade in Cairns. The Bruce Highway upgrade south of Cairns was allocated \$11.6 million over three years. There was \$8.5 billion for the Bruce Highway action plan. There was funding allocated to the Martin Street sporting reserve upgrade. The Peak Downs Crossing at Eton Range was allocated \$24 million over three years. The Bundaberg Road link was allocated \$3 million. The Obi Obi Road upgrade was allocated \$10 million in 2016-17, which I am sure, Mr Speaker, you would be very interested in.

In my area there have been a lot of safety improvements on the Sunshine Motorway that have literally saved lives. I was pleased to fight to see those implemented. We will always want more in respect of duplications, as all communities do. There are a lot of safety measures that can be put in place that make a difference. We saw this with the installation of acoustic rumble strips and the creation of better chevrons between oncoming traffic. We will see intersection improvements at the Pacific Terrace intersection with Mooloolaba-Buderim Road with signals with \$1.6 million assigned for 2015-16. These sorts of roadworks are necessary safety measures for local communities.

Where we are at at this point is determining whether we have confidence in this Labor government. There is no doubt that there are nice people on the opposite side. We even have in this strange old world of parliament friendships across the political divide. In this case though it is not about whether some of the folks opposite are nice people. It is about whether their policies are right for Queensland and their track record when it comes to what they do, not just what they say. Unfortunately, their track record has been to rack up debt and not bring about the changes necessary to ensure Queensland continues to prosper. I have no confidence in this minority Labor government to change their spots, to not deny the legacy of debt that they left another generation of Queenslanders—the intergeneration theft and fraud—and to have a proper plan to address that.