




Speech By  
**Fiona Simpson**

**MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE**

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**MOTION: STATE FINANCES**

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (6.10 pm): We have heard about the debt deniers on the Labor government benches but now we have heard about the fiscal fudgers. We have just heard from the minister. Is he seriously suggesting that this Labor Treasurer did not ask for a fiscal report from Treasury? Is he saying he did not ask for a report on the fiscal position of Queensland? Is he serious? Is the government serious? The government has just exposed itself to the very criticism that is out in the marketplace that this government is incompetent, it cannot manage money and it has learnt nothing from the legacy of debt that was racked up under a Bligh Labor government.

It was also interesting to hear that members opposite are going to deny the release of the fiscal plan for Queensland because apparently they did not ask for one—don't ask, don't know and deny. They also have a privacy policy that is all about themselves. The public servants have no privacy rights where the unions are concerned, but the government gets to have privacy with regard to any briefings it does or does not receive. They have one rule for themselves and a different one for others.

There is a simple test for the state Labor government: will they release the fiscal advice? If we are to believe the minister who just spoke, they did not ask for it; they do not have any fiscal advice as to the status in Queensland, which truly would be a stunning situation. However, that appears to be what the minister has just advised the House. Does this advice exist? Bad as Labor is in terms of fudging the fiscal position of Queensland and denying the debt that they racked up, I struggle to believe that they would not have this advice. It is important for the accountability and the integrity of this place. It is important for the accountability and the integrity with regard to the fiscal position of the budget of Queensland that this be released. I thought there was only one reason why they would not want to release it—that they were clueless about how to competently address the budget of Queensland. However, it appears now that they are even more incompetent because they do not ask for this advice so that they can deny the need to receive it.

It is important that Queensland has a competent government that is able to steer the financial ship of state. What we have seen after 100 days of a Labor government is that people were willing to look and see whether they are able to do this gig. They did not expect them to win necessarily, but they were willing to give them a go. What they are not willing to give them a go on is seeing them go back to the bad old ways of Labor, denying the way they racked up the debt. They maladministered this state in such a way that we saw money literally poured down the drain in Health with a billion dollars wasted on payroll. Their inability to address the fact that government employee expenses were growing far faster than any other state with diminishing revenues and a growing need to service a debt that was out of control meant that they have left an intergenerational debt issue that simply needed to be addressed.

I acknowledge that, on coming to government, my colleague the honourable member for Clayfield, as Treasurer, received that briefing and, as has been tabled tonight, advice from Treasury. It was a huge challenge. We knew it was not possible to talk about that, but Queenslanders deserved the truth about the situation in Queensland. We knew there had to be tough decisions if we were to

avoid lumbering not just the current generation, but also another generation with a situation that would be very difficult to repair. We were honest and released advice that was clear about the need to provide a fiscal repair task for Queensland.

Why is it important that we see a similar fiscal status report released to the parliament, which this government should have released if they are anywhere near pretending to be competent? Why is it important that it is released today? Because we know that Treasury's advice was that it was important to adopt a fiscal balance rather than a weaker operating surplus.

Labor has learnt nothing after three years in opposition. Its members had a chance to reform the way Labor did business, but unfortunately they reformed nothing, they have learnt nothing and they are on a path to create an even worse situation than the one they left this parliament, this government and this state of Queensland with when we came to power.