



Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

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MOTION OF CONFIDENCE

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (12.30 am): I rise to speak to the confidence motion and emphatically endorse the principles outlined by the Leader of the Opposition in opposing a vote of confidence in the Palaszczuk Labor government. The Labor Party has become the Bradbury government of Australian politics, securing government in Queensland with just 37½ per cent of the primary vote in Queensland—3.8 per cent less than the primary vote for the LNP. Many times in the Bjelke-Petersen era of Queensland politics the Labor Party regaled what a gerrymander it was that the National Party coalition could rule with just 37½ per cent of the Queensland vote. How the worm has turned.

In a politically cynical and desperate ploy, the Labor Party sacrificed all its principles to siphon preferences from the Greens, the Katter party, the Palmer party and from any other source it could do dirty deals with to steal government in Queensland from a dedicated LNP government which was concentrating on fixing Queensland's Labor induced fiscal pains from the past and not falling victim to the populist politics of spending tomorrow's inheritance today. This is after categorically stating, 'No, no, no deals,' during the election. It certainly feels like a deal, it certainly looks like a deal and it certainly smells like a deal to the Queensland public, so perhaps Labor could clarify to Queenslanders when a deal is not a deal. Sadly, albeit not unexpectedly, the abandonment of their own Terry Mackenroth inspired 'just vote 1' policy to suit their own political expediency so they could backdoor their way into ministerial leather worked on an unsuspecting Queensland public, and we have returned to the bad old days of a Labor government in Queensland with no financial ability, no financial responsibility and no vision for the future of Queensland other than a media grab for the six o'clock news.

That clueless collection of clots includes recycled ministers from the previous Beattie-Bligh Labor government—it would be the member for Sandgate who came back—who drove Queensland into its parlous state as the highest debt ratio state in Australia to fund their ill-conceived, failed fiscal planning misadventures on behalf of the Queensland public. Who could forget such classics as the Health payroll debacle turning a \$6 million IT upgrade into a \$1,200 million bottomless pit fiasco that was probably only surpassed in stupidity by paying Labor's fake Tahitian prince \$16 million of Queensland taxpayers' funds in order to fund his lifestyle. I am not even going to delve into the realms of the too ridiculous to recount adventures of the rogue Labor employed Dr Jayant Patel and the damage he did to the Bundaberg community and the standing of the medical fraternity under Labor's watch. Labor's idiocy contrasts sharply in this area with LNP's practicality with the nation's first ever wait time guarantee which delivered on-time elective surgery, removed the 60,000-plus long dental patient waiting list and improved Queensland's health system to be the best in Australia. It is a far cry from what the LNP inherited in 2012 from the former Labor Queensland Health life support system, with this accidental Premier receiving a health system in which Labor could target outcomes already lower than what was being achieved.

What about the money wasted on the Labor inspired ineffective drought measures inflicted on Queenslanders because Labor failed to adequately plan for Queensland's increased demand for water by cancelling the Wolffdene Dam. What about Labor's lunacy with crazy white elephant schemes such as the Currumbin desalination plant, which is still sitting there today in idle mode after costing Queenslanders \$1,200 million. Not to mention the \$2,800 million recycled water piping for Brisbane that could not get enough users to make it viable and the half a billion dollar Dreamtime exercise of the Mary River Dam, when they did not bother to ask their federal Labor counterparts until Peter Garrett knocked the proposal on the head.

The same bunch of mind-numbing clueless union hacks that brought you these logic-defying stunts are back in charge of the asylum, even though several of them have moved to what they and their union backers consider are safer seats in case the Queensland electorate wakes up to how incompetent they are sooner rather than later at the next general election. This is a clueless collection of hand-picked union clots. The only nous required to do their jobs in parliament is to put their hand up when the union bosses tell them to—a process already begun with the movement of the Labour Day public holiday at union bosses' demands.

There is a price to pay for them slavishly succumbing to the union bribery of bankrolling and staffing the Labor Party's political campaign, and that price will be union affiliated work-only practices. This ill equipped Labor government will then bring out the axe to job creation programs, abandon the payroll threshold tax increase and remove support from 8,000 small businesses. That will be the death knell for many jobs in Queensland, particularly in the mining sector which Queensland has been so heavily reliant upon for the past 15 years—a sector already concerned by Labor's lack of clear policy and historical antimining decisions. This comes from a blatant political populist chant of 'jobs, jobs, jobs' for the Queensland public—an obvious media grab ploy that unfortunately succeeded for the Labor Party—which has since backflipped into 'doubt, doubt, doubt' for projects already approved by the committed and successful LNP government. Obviously this clueless Labor government has no plan or vision for the future of our great state and is simply making it up as they go along—hardly a recipe for success.

A classic example of the clueless Labor government highlighting their inexperience, incompetence and substandard practices comes from the voice of the ACCC shooting down their power amalgamation proposal—a proposal that would open the Queensland public to electricity price increases and benefit only their union puppeteers. This regurgitation from the Beattie-Bligh era clearly shows that union bosses are already pulling the strings. It was this 'revolutionary' idea that the Beattie-Bligh government proposed as a method to deliver lower power prices, and we all know what a falsehood that Labor Party sham turned out to be. The silence from union bosses on one subject is deafening, however, after another Olympic gymnast-level Labor backflip on their promises to 'pay down debt with no asset sales'. It is now 'pay down debt with no major or strategic asset sales'. Can this be seen as trustworthy by the Queensland public, or is this another clear example of the hand-picked union clowns succumbing to union demands? This follows another favourite union—sorry, I meant Labor—tactic of talking down the economy, which is not an encouraging prospect for the cattle industry, which was ignored in its latest communication where it failed to mention cattle at all and then talked down the live export trade.

How can we have confidence in a government starring former Bligh heavyweight ministers Annastacia Palaszczuk, Curtis Pitt, Kate Jones, Stirling Hinchliffe, Cameron Dick and recycled, rejected former Bligh government members Jimmy Pearce, Grace Grace, Di Farmer and Mark Ryan, when it was the Beattie-Bligh government that tipped Queenslanders into a desperate black hole of Labor inspired debt—a debt that lost Queensland's AAA credit rating and costs Queenslanders millions of dollars more in interest repayments per annum.

These same financial planning gurus are back in charge of Queensland's future, and they collectively make Storm Financial planners look like John Maynard Keynes! Hold on, Queenslanders, for the toughest rollercoaster ride you may ever face as world resource prices put further downward pressure on a Queensland economy being driven by P-plate drivers with no business experience and not a care in the world about the difficulties confronting business operations, from small to large businesses, right across Queensland.

The only answer these union directed puppets opposite can supply for the 'jobs, jobs, jobs' mantra is for Queensland taxpayers to pay for them, to put their Labor-voting mates into well-paid, cushy, unproductive Public Service jobs that they will create which are not really necessary but will give them better job numbers at Queensland taxpayers' expense. Will the Premier commit to not increasing Queensland's Public Service numbers to hide the real effect of her job-stopping, Green-vote-garnishing stranglehold on private sector job-creating enterprise?

Of particular concern from my Gold Coast perspective is the touted winding back of the LNP's criminal outlaw bikie gang legislation which would bring bikies back to the Gold Coast and ensconce their bikie mates back in the Gold Coast community. The police say that those laws are working. The statistics and the crime busts say that they are working. So how can we have confidence in a government that want to tear apart successful, effective legislation just because they were not the ones who introduced those laws to Queensland? Those opposite certainly voted for this legislation in this parliament and now, because of political expediency and some pressure from their union masters, they are prepared to destroy good lawmaking, particularly effective on the Gold Coast, to soothe their faceless, string-pulling associates to the detriment of all Queenslanders.

How can we have confidence in a government so tricky and self-serving that it put out a parliamentary sitting dates calendar with no opportunity for the opposition to ask questions of ministers until 94 days, or a tick over three months, after the election date? Are they hiding from scrutiny, are they afraid of their ministers' capacity to provide answers to legitimate opposition questions or are they just plain arrogant in their defiance of parliamentary process and convention? It was the opposition's recognition of this unfortunate ploy that forced the government to add another sitting day tomorrow to the calendar, and that is what this opposition will continue to do. To borrow an old federal party slogan, we will be keeping the Bs honest.

Mr Speaker, this finely balanced 55th Parliament is very much in your hands, and I wish you the wisdom of Solomon as you guide Queensland's premier decision-making body on its rocky and unknown journey. The good folk of Mermaid Beach, who returned my representation to this House with a greatly appreciated substantial margin, would undoubtedly direct me to vote 'no' on any motion of confidence in a Palaszczuk Labor government, and I will accord with their wishes wholeheartedly.

In closing, the legitimacy of this government will depend, as the Governor requested, on this House providing confidence in the Palaszczuk Labor government by the recorded vote of all 89 members. Every member's vote will be a crucial and deliberate indicator of whether this government has the right to govern the direction of Queensland's important future and wellbeing. In such a delicately placed divide in this House, if any one member fails the ideals of propriety, accountability, morality and community expectation of a member of parliament in the future, this vote of confidence may well be negated by the behaviour of that member. Mr Speaker, I look forward to your rigid and firm direction in these matters.