




Speech By
Rob Molhoek

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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MOTION OF CONFIDENCE

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (11.17 pm): Mr Speaker, in rising to speak this evening, I wish to start by congratulating you on your appointment as Speaker and of course pass on my congratulations to all those gathered here in our parliament and to the Premier and her team. However, today I rise to speak against the confidence motion because I simply cannot endorse a government that was not endorsed by all Queenslanders. The LNP has accepted the fact that voters were unhappy with some of our choices over the last three years and that those decisions resulted in the loss of many former LNP seats. However, in sending a message to our party, those voters also sent a very clear message to the Labor Party. Voters deliberately did not rush back to the Labor Party as their first preference to lead Queensland. Their memory is not as short as the new Premier and her colleagues would like to believe. Queenslanders remember when their government could not pay their Health workers. They remember how the erratic spending and unjustified borrowing of consecutive Labor governments lost us our AAA credit rating. They also remember the dishonesty of the Bligh government's asset sales. Labor's decimation at the 2012 poll was no accident. However, the minority Labor government we see before us today is exactly that—an accident.

The LNP led the primary vote in 51 of the state's 89 seats and received the largest share of the primary vote. Labor won just 37 per cent of the primary vote. Sixty three per cent of Queenslanders voted for someone else. Only one party received more than one million votes and that was the LNP. Yet Labor is here to govern with a primary vote of just 37 per cent.

In my electorate of Southport, the primary vote for me and the LNP was, in fact, almost 3,000 votes greater than that for the ALP. I want to thank the people of Southport for their re-endorsement and support for my re-election as their voice and representative in the Queensland parliament. That is 3,000 more votes despite the army of Labor/union staffers who were sent from the Northern Territory and Sydney to work on the pre-poll and on the polling booths and to line up with all of their green mates out at Arundel to create the ruckus that they did and to put out the signs about asset sales and 'Save the Broadwater' and all the other issues with which they quite deliberately set out to mislead the people of Southport. And what a fiasco that was. The large corflutes, the theatre—all of it. Despite all of that, I was still able to hold that seat by some 3,000 votes. I am very proud and pleased with the support that the people of Southport have shown by supporting my re-election.

Labor does not have the clear support of Queenslanders. That is why it should not receive the support of this House. Our state needs and deserves better than a chaotic, inexperienced minority government. During the campaign the Labor Party offered very little in the way of policies and election promises and hardly presented itself as a credible alternative. The Labor Party's only two initiatives, cancelling overdue plans to increase the payroll tax threshold and amalgamating electricity assets, have been slammed by industry groups and the ACCC. The Palaszczuk government is yet to outline its plans to tackle the state's excessive debt without breaking its only major election platform of no asset sales.

The LNP had prioritised fiscal repair and Queensland was beginning to reap the rewards of controlled government spending and efficiency. So where are we headed now that Labor is back at the helm? The business community is worried about the impact of a huge machinery-of-government change with the reduction in ministries and portfolios. After the Governor's announcement yesterday that Labor will wind back WorkCover concessions for business, I am sure that business is even more concerned. Labor's proposed wind back will lead only to massive unsustainable increases in WorkCover premiums, job losses and real hardship for many of our state's small business owners and operators.

Families are also worried that rebates provided for water and electricity bills will disappear. Potential home owners are wondering if their new property will cost an extra \$7,000 if Labor again removes the principal place of residence concession. On the Gold Coast, families in my electorate are wondering how long it will take for the bikies to flock back. It is not just families who are concerned about that. The prosperity and growth of our tourism industry and thousands of jobs all hang in the balance if Labor waters down the VLAD laws and the LNP's strong actions in dealing with criminal gangs. How any member can stand here today and support this confidence motion just astounds me. Queensland has anything but confidence in this new Labor government.

I was very honoured to have been asked by our leader and member for Southern Downs, Lawrence Springborg, to join the shadow cabinet taking on the portfolio responsibilities of housing and public works. Since my appointment, I have already made contact with more than 800 stakeholders, industry groups and service providers across the state. I have already conducted many meetings here in Brisbane, Central Queensland and Townsville. I can assure the House that many of those people with whom I have already met around the state are extremely anxious about the change of government and any potential watering down of front-line services and the red- and green-tape-reduction reforms that have been brought about these past three years since the 2012 election.

When the Newman government came to office, the public housing system was losing \$140 million a year and 30,000 households were languishing on the waiting list. The building and construction sector was drowning in red tape and taxpayers were forking out billions of dollars to fund inefficient procurement strategies. In our first two years, the LNP reduced the public housing wait list by 37 per cent to below 19,000 households. The former housing minister and member for Everton, Tim Mander, provided real leadership to the sector and has been praised universally by the many stakeholders I have had the pleasure of meeting with this past month.

Our Homelessness-to-Housing Strategy had as its aim to halve homelessness in Queensland by 2020. The plan contains bricks-and-mortar initiatives together with a complete overhaul of the client intake system to ensure that people received the help they needed. We launched a Housing 2020 Strategy to deliver a flexible, efficient and responsive housing system featuring a stronger role for non-government providers and a broader range of options to help low-income families into sustainable accommodation. The Housing 2020 plan was developed to deliver an additional 12,000 homes and see up to 90 per cent of social housing managed by those not-for-profit housing organisations, which are better able to provide the support services of many high-need tenants. An audit of underoccupancy of the state's social housing stock revealed more than 1,600 undeclared occupants who were paying no rent and costing taxpayers millions of dollars each year. That is the type of inefficiency that the previous Labor government had allowed to build up in our social housing system. I dare say that I suspect that this new Labor government will do no better than its predecessor in managing the social needs of our vast state and our state's fragile finances. The additional income identified as a result of that audit will help the department fund the construction of more homes and better maintain existing social housing stock.

The Logan Renewal Initiative, Queensland's biggest social housing revitalisation, will boost the supply of social and affordable dwellings in Logan and drive urban renewal in high-density social housing estates. Since April 2012, 442 new houses have been built in Indigenous communities, with more than 78 to be built or construction completed in the current financial year.

I could go on, but I want to turn also to the state in which we found the planning and development systems of Queensland when we came to government in 2012. We had a development industry and a construction industry that was largely crippled by red tape and green tape and onerous approval processes. We had chaos as the industry ran the gauntlet of up to 14 different departments to seek approvals from state government agencies, incurring months and months of delays and imposing on the industry incredible holding costs, driving up the cost of construction, driving up the cost of building homes, with the obvious flow-on of having a huge impact on housing affordability.

Earlier we heard the former minister for child safety, communities and disabilities talk about some of the reforms that our government led with respect to child safety. And what a significant process of reform we have had the privilege of leading. We inherited an unsustainable protection system that saw costs escalating by hundreds of millions of dollars. We saw the level of intake and the number of children coming into foster care and going through multiple placement increasing at rates of up to 30 per cent per annum with no real plan to address that increase. It is a real pleasure to be able to stand in the House tonight and reflect on the achievements of our government as we sought to address that situation. We have seen a significant slowdown in the number of children coming into state care. In that respect we have seen costs starting to stabilise but, more importantly, we have seen a move away from the tertiary end of the system and huge focus on real programs and real initiatives to address the needs of children and families long before they come into the child protection system.

Apart from that, we have also seen significant reforms in respect of child protection and a great deal of work done in some of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Far North Queensland, where we all know that there are significant challenges. My concern is if the incoming government will work hard to continue to build on those reforms and build on the achievements of the Carmody inquiry.

In relation to child protection, I refer to the reforms that we were able to lead in respect of the way that repeat offender paedophiles were dealt with and new laws that were brought in with respect to child grooming and the dealing of dangerous drugs to minors.

There is a whole raft of reforms that flow off the back of the three years of the Newman government. I want to touch on some of the planning reforms. I hope that the new minister for planning and development, the Deputy Premier, will continue to build on some of the great work of the former Deputy Premier, Mr Jeff Seeney, as he sought to get the development industry of Queensland going. What an amazing two years it has been as we have dealt with many of the delays in government through the creation of SARA, the State Assessment Referral Agency, collapsing the onerous process of up to 14 departments into a single source of information and giving that particular area the ability to work with industry right across the state to get things moving. We have seen in the past 12 months thousands of applications lodged through SARA. We have seen hundreds and hundreds of assessment manager decisions issued. We have seen well over a thousand referral agency responses issued to get the construction and development industry of Queensland moving. We have seen thousands of pre-lodgement advice meetings conducted. SARA, by all accounts, has been an absolutely roaring success, winning the top award from the Planning Institute of Australia here in Queensland and then taking out the national award last year.

I also hope that the incoming government will continue to work and build on the achievements of our government in respect of getting the development systems moving, the reforms of the Planning and Development Act and, of course, building on some of the initiatives that we have undertaken in terms of bringing about sustainable infrastructure charges that actually provide opportunity for real affordability and make housing more affordable and more attractive for people to develop right across the state of Queensland.

Then there are the achievements that have come through the establishment of Economic Development Queensland and the subsequent priority development areas that have been declared. I am very proud of the fact that the Southport Priority Development Area has been such a success. I was pleased to read the latest account from Gold Coast City Council just the other day in terms of the number of projects that have been approved. Some \$2.47 billion of new projects have been approved in the electorate of Southport, projects like a new eight-storey high-rise apartment building in Lenneberg Street; projects in Meron Street, White Street and Norman Street; a number of significant projects that have been able to go ahead because of the new declaration as a priority development area in Scarborough Street and Garden Street; other approvals in Nind Street and down on Brighton Parade; discussion and dialogue going on about a potential \$1 billion development at the Star of the Sea site; a 70-storey mixed use tower in Marine Parade; another 30-storey tower in Suter and Garden streets; and another 70-storey tower already approved in Rawlins and Nerang streets. These are just some of the great achievements that have been facilitated by the reforms of our government in our attempts and our passion to really get things moving.

I am also concerned about the incoming government and some of the dialogue that I have heard around the VLAD reforms. I am very concerned about what Labor is going to do in relation to crime. In the last few years on the Gold Coast we have seen a significant improvement in relation to crime statistics. We have seen robberies down 18 per cent across-the-board. We have seen a drop in break and enters: in some areas up to 43 per cent but across-the-board of 30 per cent. We have seen assault and serious assault decline some 15 per cent to 20 per cent in the last two years. General

theft is also significantly down. We have also been able to fund two permanent police choppers for the state, something that the previous government promised for many years but for some reason never got around to providing. That has been a significant difference. We have heard the rhetoric from the other side of the House about creating more front-line jobs, but our government actually got on with it: 760 more police across Queensland and a special crime unit on the Gold Coast which those opposite have set out to dismantle and get rid of.

I want to know what Labor is going to do about the health system. What I have seen on the Gold Coast and what we have seen across the state is a reduction in waiting lists and no more dental waiting list. We have seen reductions in the time spent waiting in the emergency department in our hospitals. On the Gold Coast we have seen Health spending increase under the LNP government by some 17 per cent in the last two years; more than \$400 million a year in increased spending each year over the last two years providing better services for Gold Coasters. We have seen the best elective surgery wait times in Australia reduce down to 27 days and long wait surgery wait times down from an average of 185 days some two or three years ago to 51 days.

I wonder what Labor will do about asset sales. Didn't we get beaten up during the election over asset sales? Let us talk about the incoming government's record on asset sales. I note that in 2009 the Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Curtis Pitt, voted to sell Forestry Plantations Queensland and the Port of Brisbane, the tolling rights to Queensland Motorways, the Abbot Point coal terminal and Queensland Rail's coal transport business. I note also that the Premier voted on significant asset sales in 2006 and then again in 2009, selling off Sun Retail—Energex's retail electricity business—Sun Gas, Allgas Distribution, Powerdirect—Ergon's retail electricity business—Gas Pipeline Assets, gas merchant Enertrade and wind energy assets. I note also that the member for Bundamba, Jo-Ann Miller, was here in 2009 and 2006 and she voted to support all of those asset sales, the very same ones that the Premier and the Treasurer of today voted to support. The hypocrisy of this government is absolutely breathtaking. I note that our new Minister for Health, Cameron Dick, the member for Woodridge, was here in 2009 also and he voted to sell off significant assets across the state, again without a mandate. Who could forget our wonderful Kate Jones, the Minister for Education and member for Ashgrove. She also was here in 2006 and 2009 and she supported the sale of all those assets. The hypocrisy of this incoming government is absolutely breathtaking. I will be voting with my colleagues on this side of the House against the motion today because this government is not a choice made by voters; it is a choice made by the member for Nicklin and I do not believe that that gives Labor the mandate that they have so arrogantly claimed. This evening we heard a great lecture on arrogance from the member for Bundamba. The behaviour of this side of the House has been anything but.