




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

Record of Proceedings, 26 March 2015

MOTION OF CONFIDENCE

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (1.54 am): I rise to speak against the motion of confidence in the Labor government moved by the Premier. Firstly, Mr Speaker, let me congratulate you on your role and I look forward to fairness and impartiality in this House during the course of this term. On 31 January 2015, the residents of my electorate spoke loudly and clearly about which party they wanted to form government in this state. Whether it was in the suburbs of Robina and Reedy Creek, the hinterland areas of Mudgeeraba and Tallai, the rolling hills of Lower Beechmont and the Numinbah Valley or all the communities in between, the message they sent on election day was clear—they wanted the LNP to lead this state for another three years.

I do, however, acknowledge the concerns raised with me after doorknocking 7,500 homes myself, and I can honestly say that I never stopped listening to my residents and they rewarded me with re-election for the third time. They wanted a local member who was strong and who would continue to take our community forward and represent their local interests. They wanted to keep a government that made progress in areas like health, education, law and order and the cost of living. They wanted a mature, considered government with clear policies to take this state forward. What they got instead was a Labor government with no clear mandate. They now have a parliament where no party has a majority and the new Labor government's power to pass legislation and govern for Queenslanders is drawn from the crossbenches.

When they went to the polls, Mudgeeraba locals had just experienced three years of competent, stable government. Their businesses had grown as confidence had been restored and more staff were employed, boosting the local economy. Their streets were safer than ever as crime and antisocial behaviour had been tackled head-on in our local community. Their children's schools were better funded and their maintenance backlogs had finally been addressed. Their hospitals were greatly improved and urgent patients were finally seen on time. As a result, the Labor Party, which has now formed government in Queensland, received only 27.7 per cent of the primary vote in my electorate. On primary votes, 70 per cent of my constituents made it known that the Labor Party was not their first choice to form government in this state.

My residents have once again put their trust in me and I would be remiss if I did not stand up for them in this House and speak against this motion of confidence. Residents of my electorate are rightfully concerned about what lies ahead for their families, their businesses, the cost of living, their children's schools, their hospitals and the overall governance of their state. My residents are concerned about Queensland's debt. While Mudgeeraba locals had seen an LNP government working calmly and methodically to reduce debt and our interest bill, they now have a Labor government who have refused to rule out increasing the debt to fund their spending programs. Their concerns are well founded, as while the LNP side of parliament delivered zero net debt for Queensland under the Borbidge government, the Beattie and Bligh Labor governments put us back on track to \$80 billion in debt.

It was the former LNP government that put us back on track to reducing debt after the Labor Party's spending spree lost our state its AAA credit rating, adding \$200 million to Queensland's yearly interest bill. My constituents know that only the LNP has put forward a credible plan to reduce debt and recover the AAA credit rating without asset sales. I know that after our efforts to pay down debt and reduce the cost of living and the cost of doing business, small businesses in my electorate were finally getting the confidence they needed to expand and to employ more staff. In my electorate of Mudgeeraba, the unemployment rate fell from 4.5 per cent to 4.1 per cent. That confidence is now in jeopardy, as these businesses have now been left in the dark as they wonder whether this government will take us back to the bad old days of debt and deficit.

My residents are concerned for their cost of living and their ability to provide for their families. Mudgeeraba locals had just seen a government work determinedly for three years to reduce their cost of living and improve their economy. They know that, while the Labor Party will increase the government burden on taxpayers, it is an LNP government which worked to reduce their cost of living and debt. We saved Mudgeeraba households an average of \$120 each by freezing the domestic electricity tariff in 2012-13, while ensuring everyone pays the same price for electricity through subsidies worth more than \$622 million this financial year. We saved them \$80 by delivering a one-off water rebate in 2012-13. We saved car owners \$85 over three years when we froze car registration costs. We saved commuters up to \$529 per year through public transport reforms, while producing savings for regional users of public transport as well.

We saved homebuyers up to \$7,175 each when the LNP government reinstated the principal-place-of-residence concessional rate of stamp duty. We assisted the sick when the LNP doubled the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme for accommodation and travel. The removal of the carbon tax by our federal LNP colleagues saved the average Mudgeeraba household around \$170. With the Labor Party's record for increasing the cost of living through policy failures like the \$9 billion water grid fiasco or the Tugun desalination plant, which continues to rust away, my residents are concerned about whether their cost of living will increase under this government. Mudgeeraba residents are concerned they will not have access to the improved health care that they had under the LNP. For three years under an LNP government my residents saw improvements in their health care after we worked to reduce waiting lists, provide better care and ensure urgent patients were seen on time.

On polling day people in Mudgeeraba voted for an LNP government, which was moving to introduce Australia's first on time surgery guarantee. It meant that if someone's local hospital could not provide treatment within the medically recommended time, they would be offered the next available appointment in a public or private hospital somewhere in the state at no cost. Instead, they now have a Labor government which has already scrapped the LNP's wait time guarantee and set interim surgery targets which have already been reached or exceeded under the former government. This means residents of my electorate will miss out on getting their elective surgery on time. The Labor government has put the wishes of union bosses before the interests of Mudgeeraba locals and scrapped this great program solely because it was an LNP initiative. Despite doctors and patients supporting the wait time guarantee, once again politics has come first for the Labor Party.

My residents are concerned for the future of their children's schools. For three years under the LNP, residents of my electorate saw their schools improving with bigger budgets, more resources, better programs and more localised control for principals and P&C associations. In my electorate \$8.5 million in funding and better facilities was delivered to our schools as well as an additional \$2.8 million to get them prepared for the transition of year 7 into high school. Merrimac State High School was given independent public school status of which they are very proud while we delivered an additional 64 prep teacher aide hours for our local schools. Principals were breathing a collective sigh of relief as they were able to introduce local solutions to local problems rather than having these initiatives run by bureaucrats in Brisbane. Residents voted decisively for a continuation of the LNP's education policies but now concerns have been raised that the Labor Party has no plan to build the 443 extra classrooms that Queensland needs every year for the next 10 years to cater for expected growth. During the election the Labor Party did not make any commitment to deliver the extra schools our state needs and residents of my electorate are now asking whether this government is fit to manage our education system into the future.

My residents are concerned our local area may not receive the better roads it needs for the growing population. Under the LNP, my electorate saw substantial progress in delivering significant infrastructure projects for our local roads. My electorate supported even more infrastructure spending to reduce traffic for local motorists. We launched massive upgrades of significant state roads and the M1 has now been widened all the way from exit 73 to exit 82 and roads like Worongary Road have had their unsafe sections rebuilt or resealed. They are rightfully concerned that this government has now cast doubt over whether essential infrastructure projects which would improve our local area and

create jobs will be delivered. With the Labor government pledging to review infrastructure spending, residents of my electorate now have to wait a year while the new government figures out what its plan is. They are concerned that much needed, common-sense upgrades which would have been delivered under an LNP government, like the upgrade of the Gooding Drive roundabout, may no longer be delivered and will instead be tied up in bureaucratic review processes.

Residents of Mudgeeraba voted for an LNP government that would continue to deliver safer local streets and ensure that our police are well equipped to protect them and their families, and they are now concerned progress will be undone. In my electorate, under the LNP, we delivered more police and a new police helicopter for our local area and saw a crackdown on graffiti, hooning, antisocial behaviour and criminal motorcycle gangs. In response to shocking incidents not far from the homes of my constituents involving criminal motorcycle gang members, we passed legislation to tackle outlaw motorcycle gangs and the criminal enterprises that they ran, making our streets safer for local families and making them more secure.

I had a bikie clubhouse in my electorate; I had the Nomad outlaw motorcycle gang clubhouse. They used to hang out on the verandah at Wallaby Bob's at Mudgeeraba on a Saturday and Sunday. Local families were too frightened to go there anymore. They are not there anymore. Members in this House would remember—and even those who have returned in this term of parliament—that two criminal motorcycle gang members had a shootout at Robina shopping centre. That woman was also from my electorate. During the election campaign while I was sitting in my backyard having a cup of tea early in the morning, the police helicopter was hovering around my home. Then I found out that Task Force Maxima had actually raided a house six doors down from mine. It was a Hells Angels criminal motorcycle gang member. Task Force Maxima raided the house and took out a million dollars of drugs, guns and flak jackets—six doors down from me. I am very, very pleased that we brought in these laws on the Gold Coast. I appreciate that not everyone in Queensland had the same issue that we did. Certainly people in my electorate feel a lot safer than they did previously. Even today in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* there was an article about a Reedy Creek home invasion by a member of the Black Uhlans—Reedy Creek is where I live—and he was convicted of that home invasion today.

Those clubhouses in my electorate were shut down and offenders were finally being given the sentences they deserve, much to the relief of local residents. Organised crime, which for too long had been running rife on Gold Coast streets, was finally being addressed and local residents certainly could sleep easier at night. Unfortunately, we have already seen comments from the Labor government about these laws and consideration of lighter sentences to save space in jails. Bikies are also now making a reappearance on the Gold Coast, with a massive poker run earlier this month in an obvious show of defiance to demonstrate they do not take this new government seriously. The Labor Party has always been unclear about whether it agrees with criminal motorcycle gangs and the problems that they pose for our community. First it supported our tough laws, then it promised to repeal them, then it promised on the eve of the election to instead launch a review.

I hope that this government takes into consideration the views of the many people who live on the Gold Coast who have had to deal with this scourge for many, many years. We have finally cleaned up our streets. As I said, Labor has always seemed to have a softer approach to crime and community safety, and this government still has not decided whether it thinks bikies are a problem or not. When they cast their vote, my constituents did not agree that Labor members are fit to administer our state's justice system and still do not know whether the progress we have made to address local crime will be undone. Most significantly, my constituents are concerned this government, with its limited policy platform and lack of a clear mandate, will not govern in their interests or be as open and accountable as was mooted during the election campaign. The LNP government was open and upfront about its plan to take Queensland forward. My constituents are still concerned that they do not have confidence in the Labor government. Unlike those opposite, residents of my electorate understand that the state's finances must be repaired and our debt must be paid down. While the LNP has obviously since rethought its policy platform following the formation of the Labor government, it was clear that the voters of my electorate did not register widespread dissatisfaction with our proposals and were encouraged by our honest and frank approach. In contrast, the Labor government's campaign manifesto of policies was grossly inadequate, and voters of my electorate continue to have no clear indication of what Labor will do in power. The Labor Party has wasted no time in backflipping and mixing words on its one clear election promise: not to sell assets.

Throughout the election campaign, I lost count of the number of times the Labor Party promised Queenslanders and residents of my electorate that it would not sell assets and misleadingly told them that the LNP's plan for leasing some assets amounted to asset sales. Since coming to power, the Labor Party has changed its mind on a key election promise and said it is now only selling 'non-strategic' assets, a catch-all term no doubt designed to let it sell whatever they want, whenever

they want, without a mandate, under the dubious 'non-strategic' banner. Residents are rightfully concerned about the implications this will have on the confidence in Queensland and what the Labor Party plans to sell. Not only that, but my constituents are concerned about the culture the Labor Party will bring to the government of Queensland, and whether we will go back to the bad old days of union officials and backroom figures wielding undue influence on policy.

The modern Labor Party is one in which the power of union bosses is supreme, and rank-and-file members are given a more limited voice. Residents of my electorate want open and accountable government, but simply do not have the confidence in the Labor Party to provide that. Since they cast their votes, my constituents have seen the Labor Party go back on their promise not to enter into agreements with minor parties and Independents to form government.

The memory of my constituents, with broken promise after broken promise, is instinctively cast back to Labor's last term in government. They remember the \$1.25 billion Health payroll debacle, which saw their local nurses paid wrongly or not at all. They remember the last time that union bosses ruled and the implications to the economy and employment conditions—not to mention the culture of governance in our state. Most importantly, they remember the assets sales initiated by the Bligh government when the new Premier was a cabinet minister and the way they were ignored by a government which sold assets without a mandate. The new Premier played a key role in the sale of Queensland transport assets, and residents are rightly concerned about which non-strategic assets will be sold.

The concerns of local residents in my electorate are shared by Queenslanders throughout the state, with the LNP having received 41.3 per cent of the primary vote to the Labor Party's 37.5. Despite the Labor Party having been able to form minority government with the support of an Independent member, it remains indisputable that more Queenslanders voted for the Liberal National Party than the Labor Party at the most recent election. The Labor government is in government not because this was the will of Queenslanders, but because it was the will of the crossbench. There can be no doubt that this government flopped over the line without the clear support of Queenslanders and after dishonest scare campaigns during the state election aided by union figures.

It is clear that the role of the LNP opposition in holding this Labor Party government to account will be crucial to the governance of Queensland over the next three years. We will seek to ensure that the over one million Queenslanders who voted for the LNP are represented in this parliament, and it will be my role to ensure that my electorate, which voted decisively for the LNP party, is represented and that the concerns of residents are addressed no matter who is in government. It will be my role to ensure that their local issues are not ignored or dismissed, as this Labor government scrambled together a plan for Queenslanders without the clear support of the majority of Queenslanders. It will be my role to ensure that, with all of their concerns about this government and its lack of a plan or clear mandate, my constituents will still have a local member fighting for them. Mudgeeraba's residents have made it clear that they do not have confidence in the Labor Party to form government, and that is why I oppose this motion of confidence on their behalf.