




Speech By  
**Steve Minnikin**

**MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH**

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### **MOTION OF CONFIDENCE**

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (12.43 am): Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment. I assure you, I am not doing my Terry Mackenroth impersonation. Before I speak in detail to this motion, I congratulate all members in the chamber who won their seats and have the privilege of representing their respective electorates in the 55th Parliament. I again sincerely thank the people of the Chatsworth electorate for placing their faith in me to represent them in this place. It is a true privilege and it is one that I indeed cherish. I also acknowledge the valuable contribution made by defeated and retiring members from the 54th Parliament. One does not realise how much of a privilege it is to serve in this hallowed chamber until one no longer has that opportunity and privilege.

How blessed are we all to be living in the greatest state within the greatest nation on earth, where we can have a transference of political power, with the result hanging in the balance for a couple of weeks, and still have an orderly and peaceful transition? Some may say that the greatest winner from the recent state election was the way in which our constitutional model fulfilled its purpose flawlessly.

The old political adage that 'oppositions don't win government; governments lose government' can be no better illustrated than by the recent state election result. Given the enormity of the Newman government win in 2012, there was potential to stay in office for at least two to three terms. That we on this side of the chamber exhausted all of our political capital when sitting on the government side of the chamber in just 34 months compels me to apologise to the one million-plus supporters who voted for the LNP at the most recent election. Equally deserving of an apology are the unknown number of swinging voters who were unable to find it within their hearts and minds to support us on this occasion. We let many people down but, given the current composition of this 55th Parliament, we are far from down and out, even if my voice makes it sound like it!

Labor's primary vote on 31 January was 37.47 per cent—less than the LNP's primary vote of 41.23 per cent. Labor was the first choice of 983,000 Queenslanders, but the LNP was the first choice of 1,084,000 Queenslanders. Today in Queensland the LNP is the only party with more than a million votes, but Labor is governing with a primary vote of less than 37.5 per cent.

Regardless of the extraordinary circumstances the recent state election delivered, the Labor Party won and now has the privilege of forming a minority government. To deny this obvious fact is churlish and insults the intelligence of voters when people say that they have no mandate to govern. Simply put, the 'vote every square' tactic adopted by the Labor Party campaign team proved effective given there was a mood in the electorate to send the Newman government a message. Many political commentators and armchair experts will continue to ruminate as to what went wrong. The simple fact is that all of us on this side of the chamber need to take responsibility for the result, learn from our mistakes, desist wallowing in self-pity and get on with the job.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the 51 Liberal National Party candidates across the state who on 31 January 2015 won the primary vote in their respective electorates. The Labor Party won the election, but that does not mean we should have confidence in its ability to offer the people of Queensland good governance, which I will address. Propped up by an unholy alliance of Far Left preferences and Independent kingmakers, Labor's minority government is a veritable house of cards and deserves sustained criticism and scrutiny. Such a critique will occupy the remainder of my allocated speaking time this morning.

The statewide primary vote to the Greens political party was a low of eight per cent and, yet again, it won zero seats in the House. Yet the current of Greens preferences was strong enough to drown the voice of the majority and deliver Labor 44 seats and, ultimately, minority government. An analysis of the facts can see that a key feature of the 2015 election was the preference flows. The ABC's renowned election analyst, Antony Green, had some insights to offer here. In 2009, 39 per cent of Greens preferences in 71 electorates flowed to Labor. In 2012, when the Greens political party fielded just 33 candidates, 43 per cent of preferences flowed to Labor. This year we have seen a 20 per cent increase in Greens preference flows to Labor, propping up Labor's primary vote in nine key seats.

In Barron River, Labor's candidate earned just 39 per cent of the primary vote but walked away with a two-party preferred result of 53 per cent. Similarly in Brisbane Central, the new member scraped just 37 per cent of the primary vote but won the seat with a three per cent margin. In Bundaberg, Labor polled marginally better, with a primary vote of 40 per cent, but still needed the Greens political party to carry the current member over the line, to a margin of 1.16 per cent.

The drawn-out ballot for Ferny Grove was crystal clear on primaries, with Labor polling at just 38 per cent to the LNP's Dale Shuttleworth's 45 per cent and yet after weeks of agonising counts and recounts Labor again fell over the line with a margin of less than one per cent. The electorate of Maryborough follows this pattern. Just 25 per cent of residents voted for the Labor Party yet the member who now represents 100 per cent of them is absolutely held to ransom by Greens preferences. It goes on and on. The electorate of Mount Coot-tha suffered a similar fate. Less than a third of voters were interested in what Labor's then candidate was selling and now 100 per cent of Mount Coot-tha will have to pay for it. Mundingburra, Pumicestone and Springwood saw much tighter primary vote results, with the Liberal National Party's vote higher than any other party. Labor's victories in these three key seats are also propped up by preference deals. Now, that is confidence! After a decade in which the number of voters nominating preferences has declined consistently, this trend was reversed in the last election. As Antony Green wrote following the election, Labor, its unions and the Greens political party had everything to gain by recommending lists of preferences on the how-to-vote cards in most electorates. These preference recommendations have been the difference between Labor winning the 2015 election and the Liberal National Party being returned.

Queensland's new Premier, Premier Palaszczuk, was elected on the promise of governing for all of Queensland. But as we can see from these preference flows, Queensland Labor is held to ransom by Greens preferences. Queensland Labor does not govern for all of Queensland. Queensland Labor governs for the Greens political party. Premier Palaszczuk was elected on the promise of governing for all of Queensland. This promise lasted only until deliberations for cabinet positions commenced. I am sure all members in this chamber value Queensland's proud democratic traditions and were appalled to read the *Courier-Mail's* headline in early February that heralded the entry of United Voice union boss Gary Bullock to the forefront of our political scene. This kingmaker of Queensland Labor reportedly hand picked more than half of the current ministry. Queensland Labor does not govern for all of Queensland. Queensland Labor governs for trade union bosses. To support this point, it was there for all to see only 24 hours ago on the Speaker's Green with the large number of union heavyweights who were naturally invited to partake in the celebrations.

Premier Palaszczuk was elected on the promise of governing for all of Queensland. The Palaszczuk government has to date signalled only mild interest in upholding the Liberal National Party's strong stance on law and order and condemnation of criminal gangs, promising nothing more than a review. Actions in the coming months will indeed speak louder than words. Time will tell. Premier Palaszczuk was elected on the promise of governing for all of Queensland. However, as I survey the members opposite, I could be stepping back in time. Little good can be said about Queensland Labor, save for its commitment to recycling. Not content with the damage wrought during the Beattie-Bligh years, like economic wrecking balls Labor has recycled candidates and family dynasties have swung back into power. The Hon. Kate Jones is not a new face, and we have seen the member for Woodridge before. Former senator Mark Furner has jumped ship from the state's representative in the federal Senate to this state House, and the list goes on and on. Di Farmer, Jim Pearce, Mark Ryan, Grace Grace, Stirling Hinchliffe—all failed members of the disastrous Beattie-Bligh years recycled back into our parliament. Now, doesn't that truly inspire confidence in this

new administration? I think not! Members opposite may fool themselves, but it is clear to the Queensland public: Queensland Labor does not govern for all of Queensland. Queensland Labor governs for Queensland Labor.

As I have articulated, Queensland Labor is held to ransom by vested interests and fringe parties. Our new Labor government has no plan for Queensland bar one—to protect its own political interests, not the interests of Queensland. This government will do anything to cling to power. It is akin to watching a remake of the old comedy movie *Weekend at Bernie's*. Labor members could be catatonic in a closet, but they will be propped up, stitched up and brought into the chamber in a desperate bid to cling to office. It took less than a month for this government to backflip on its opposition to asset sales, using tired semantics to find wiggle room in its core election promise. The backroom spin doctors have begun to water down the political narrative in a Svengali-like manner. As I tweeted in a recent post, all assets are equal. Some assets are more equal—insert 'strategic/major'—than others, and so the Labor hypocrisy begins.

Queensland Labor will say and do anything to win and hold power. It was elected without a plan for our great state. It ran a small target strategy with a leader at the time who smiled and waved to everyone, capitalising upon our perceived arrogance. It ran a very smart campaign whereas we did not. We did not remind voters of how hopeless and incompetent the former Bligh government was. Whilst you need to focus on the future—that is true enough—in politics you always need to highlight the key differences and remind voters of the past. Why would we have any confidence in this government when many of the economic tyros who put us on the path of exponential debt spiral are now back in this chamber on the back of Greens preferences?

Every one of our members in this House will spend every hour of their time on these benches subjecting this minority government to unrelenting scrutiny, as we should do. We should act in a responsible manner to hold the government to account and adopt a pragmatic and sensible approach to opposition as espoused by Menzies—in other words, do not oppose just for the sake of opposing. If the government introduces legislation which is good for the state and our wonderful citizens deserve it, we should support it. There will inevitably be policy areas of ideological difference, and this is where we should highlight these distinctions and offer ourselves as a genuine political alternative at the next state election. The worst mistake we could make as an opposition is to think that all we need to do is wait over the next six to 12 months for an inevitable return to the government side of the chamber given the hopeless and inept form of those now in government. We need to be a hardworking opposition, listen to our key stakeholders, regain the trust of our support base, campaign vigorously in three years time and earn the right to occupy the other side of the chamber. Nothing in life worth having should come easily, and politics is indeed no different.

We may have failed to remind Queenslanders of the Health payroll debacle, of pipes without dams, dams without pipes, 15 per cent annual public transport fare increases, Tahitian princes and thought-bubble desalination plants. I could go on and on, but in the interests of time I will not. This government does not govern with the support of the majority of Queenslanders and this government does not govern for Queensland. This government governs for the Greens political party and trade union bosses. This government governs for Queensland Labor. Within 24 hours of the last state election, the old Labor firm comprising former state members was seen getting in the lift up to level 15 in the Executive Building. Who is really calling the shots here? How could I honestly support this motion of confidence in this minority government?

A cursory glance of many of Labor members' past backgrounds and limited life experiences viewed through the prism of trade union movement and the green movement have failed to equip them with the skill sets to govern responsibly. It is a fact that Labor lost our AAA credit rating, adding approximately \$200 million to Queensland's yearly interest bill. Ultimately, the state must recover its AAA credit rating which was lost by the former Bligh Labor government through massive increases in debt. The two new Labor initiatives are amalgamating electricity assets to save \$150 million and cancelling overdue plans to lift the payroll tax threshold to save \$250 million. The first initiative is already being recanted and under fire from the ACCC, which states that disproportionate power will be awarded to the new electricity generating entity and that power prices will increase as a result. In response, the new Treasurer indicated immediately that the state could change its plans, accepting the consequent impact on its promised efforts to reduce debt. That is not a particularly confident start.

It is worth noting that the second initiative is also under direct criticism from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland and others. CCIQ estimates that 20,000 businesses will be impacted and 4,000 Queensland jobs will be lost as a result. Measures such as these are a direct disincentive to business and it will stifle and stunt economic growth and will also tend to undermine growth in revenue to government. I simply cannot support this motion. As Abraham Lincoln famously said, a house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure.