




Speech By  
**Trevor Watts**

**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH**

---

Record of Proceedings, 26 March 2015

**MOTION OF CONFIDENCE**

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (2.53 am): Mr Speaker, first might I congratulate you on your appointment to the office of Speaker. I would also like to congratulate the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the other ministers on their appointment and, in fact, all members of this House. It is a great honour to serve and represent the people of Queensland. However, I cannot support this motion. I have no confidence in this government and even less confidence that Labor will represent the interests of my electorate.

I would like to thank my electorate for showing its confidence in me: 14,999 people voted for me at the election and 14,064 voted for Kerry Shine, Labor's candidate at the election. Before I come to that, I would just like to reiterate some of the words the member for Hinchinbrook spoke earlier. Labor does not have a clear mandate to take government and it has to come back to this chamber and the numbers have to be tested on the floor.

**A government member:** That's why we're here.

**Mr WATTS:** Absolutely that is why we are here. That is exactly why we are having this debate. I will be one who will be opposing this motion. I might just for a moment talk about the seat of Nicklin. I would bring to the attention of the people of this House that in the seat of Nicklin 16 per cent of the people voted for Labor; 31 per cent voted for the LNP. It is interesting that they will be depending on that 16 per cent to be in charge of this state. I would like to acknowledge and make sure that I am very clear on this: the LNP did make mistakes and we are now in this position because the people of Queensland have held us accountable for those mistakes.

Many members here have discussed state matters. I will concentrate on my electorate to explain why I will not be supporting this motion. I will focus on my electorate and its point of view and why I do not have any confidence in this government. Since 1974 there have been 15 elections in my electorate. Five times the Labor candidate has been returned, three times the Liberal candidate, five times the National candidate and twice the LNP candidate. The Hon. Kerry Shine, a former member in this place, has offered himself on seven occasions to the electorate. He won on four of those occasions and lost on three. In 2015 Kerry won 12 booths and I won 12 booths. Clearly the electorate has an affinity for both parties. It has always been a swinging seat. I want to make it very clear that Kerry is a well-respected member of the Labor Party in my electorate. He was a well-respected local member and he fought to represent that electorate. Between 1998 and 2006 he had achieved an 18½ per cent swing to him over that period of time. That was an 18½ per cent swing to a Labor member who was by this time a representative of Western Queensland for the Premier and also a cabinet minister and yet the Labor government delivered absolutely nothing for our electorate, nothing west of the range. The Labor government had absolutely no interest in delivering the range crossing, the most important issue to Western Queensland—none at all. It needs to be very clear that I can never have confidence in a Labor government because the Labor government has completely neglected my electorate even when it had a local member there who had achieved an 18.5 per cent swing to him. The second range crossing is not on their agenda.

I have written to several members, including the Premier of the current government, and as yet I have not received a reply. I have to say that that is very concerning for the people of my electorate. They have very little confidence because history tells them that Labor will ignore them. They have very little confidence that the time line will be met. They have very little confidence that the 1,800 jobs that will be created by this piece of infrastructure will be delivered on time and even less confidence that it will be delivered on budget. The people of Highfields had been screaming out for a school for a long time. Several members of the Labor Party had visited Highfields and talked about a school. That is exactly what they did: they talked about it and talked about it and talked about it.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr WATTS:** I take the interjection. They did buy the land, that is quite correct. A week after we announced that we would buy the land in 2009 they were embarrassed into announcing that they would buy the land. If the member wants to interject he needs to get his time lines correct. Those opposite were embarrassed into having to buy the land.

The land was bought, but can members guess what happened next for the people of Highfields? Every day, 1,200 kids still had to travel by bus for over an hour each way to and from town, because for three years absolutely nothing happened with that block of land. Yet again nothing was delivered for the people of my electorate. There was talk, the minister came up and people discussed it. There were lots of conversations, but nothing was delivered. I promised that the LNP would deliver something at Highfields. We said we would deliver a school. Can members guess what happened in the 34 months that we were in power? The school was designed, it was built and it was delivered on time and on budget. It is the LNP way to say what you are going to do, to do what you have said you will do and to do it on time and on budget.

The people of my electorate have voted me into this place to represent them and they could not possibly want me to show any confidence in a Labor government that has a history of ignoring them repeatedly. Even worse, it has ignored the people of Western Queensland and everybody living west of the divide through its total neglect of the Toowoomba second range crossing and, of course, the Warrego Highway more generally.

I know the hour is getting late, but I will take a couple of moments to talk about a couple of state issues. In my electorate many people have come up to me and asked, 'What does this \$80 billion worth of debt really mean? What does the loss of the AAA credit rating really mean?' Government gets its money from one source, that is, the people it represents. It means that a Labor government spent our children's tax. Our children will have to pay back this bill if we do not bring some good governance to this state and some financial rigour to the accounts. I am very concerned about some of the promises and announcements that I have heard, because I do not see the financial figures adding up. I am very worried and concerned that people do not understand the difference between a profit and loss and a balance sheet; that they do not understand that you cannot spend something off both the profit and the loss columns, from both sides of your balance sheet, and count it three times. I am very concerned about that. Ultimately, that \$80 billion debt is our children's tax that Labor spent. While it was spending our children's tax, it delivered nothing to my electorate. So how could anybody in my electorate have confidence in a Labor government?

In the brief time that I have represented my electorate, with the help of the ministers and the LNP government we delivered an 18 per cent increase in health spending; three new high schools were approved, one was built and constructed and two were expanded; the second range crossing was announced with a commitment of \$320 million of state government money and the potential creation of 1,800 jobs; and a \$74 million electrical upgrade has allowed the expansion of Grand Central Shopping Centre, which will become a major regional shopping centre that will deliver 1,000 retail jobs when it opens, as well as many jobs during its construction. I note that many of the CFMEU members who travel to my electorate to work on that project campaigned very hard to make sure that I was not elected.

We delivered \$45 million for flood mitigation on the CBD ring-road upgrade, which was another commitment made and another road that will open very soon. That road and the flood works release the inner-city rail land, which is another project that I and others chased very hard so that we could deliver inner-city renewal to the electorate. It is a wonderful 10-hectare site that now forms part of a priority development area. I encourage the Deputy Premier to come and look at the old rail shed. It is in need of some money and the parkland will need some money to provide the catalytic infrastructure to be able to get this project underway. The revenue that can be generated from the construction and the jobs that the project has the opportunity to create should be something very interesting for the Deputy Premier to look at.

As I represent the people of Toowoomba North, of course I cannot have any confidence in a Labor government that has completely ignored my electorate. Even when one of its own was sitting at the cabinet table and had achieved an 18.5 per cent swing, it totally ignored my electorate. What chance does my electorate have now under this government? I have no confidence in this government whatsoever.