



Speech By
Hon. Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Taxation Reform

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (9.39 am): When Malcolm Turnbull ascended to the prime ministership just over five months ago, his pitch for the nation's highest office was clear. He believed that Tony Abbott was not providing the economic leadership the nation needs and the economic confidence business needs. Sadly, this was the case then and it is still the case today. The Turnbull Liberal government has unleashed an armada of thought bubbles. All of them have burst.

We eventually received their modelling on the GST. Of course, we received it via a press release. So disingenuous was he about tax reform that Scott Morrison told the media before he told the states. As I said before the last meeting of treasurers, we had more luck getting information out of Clive Palmer than out of Scott Morrison.

The federal LNP had 2½ years of flip-flopping on tax, just to end up back where we started. Scott Morrison conceded yesterday, in what was originally supposed to be his GST manifesto keynote address, that—

... after these last couple of years, we are basically in the same position that we were two years ago.

Officially, the coalition says that the GST is dead, but, just like the LNP's asset sales in Queensland, it is still lurking in the background, waiting to re-emerge after the next election—a bit like Work Choices. The member for Southern Downs was quite happy to let working Queenslanders be slugged with a GST hike yet at the same time wants to get rid of state revenue sources such as payroll tax. Back in November the member for Southern Downs told the *Brisbane Times* that in supporting the GST hike he thought payroll tax 'would have to go'. A few months later Scott Morrison said quite publicly that payroll tax was a 'matter for the states' but that he would like to see payroll tax harmonisation. We all know what harmonisation would mean for Queensland, given we already have the lowest payroll tax rate and the highest threshold of any mainland state.

Yesterday the federal Treasurer confirmed the \$80 billion in health and education cuts in his media club address. He wiped his hands of the \$18 billion cut from Queensland. Their cuts are apparently now our problem. I hear that the federal Treasurer, like John Howard, is a bit of a cricket tragic. Yesterday he described budget repair as a test match, not a Twenty20. Well, Scott Morrison is 5/38 in the first session. It does not look like he is going to last the five days. The big bash is going to be coming at the election.

The tragedy in all of this is that \$70 billion of the \$80 billion cuts from schools and from hospitals has now been spent again by the LNP in Canberra on what Scott Morrison dismissed yesterday as other priorities. Now we have a Prime Minister who is looking at a \$50 billion outsourcing program for our health services. This would be the end of Australian health care as we know it. If there is one thing you can be sure of, Mr Speaker, it is that, whether it is the LNP in Queensland or the coalition in Canberra, genuine reform is always bowled, middle stump. But mindless cuts to the public services that Queensland families rely on are always in play.