




Speech By
Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Gladstone Ports Corporation

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (2.37 pm): I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the member for Clayfield on his elevation to the position of Leader of the Opposition. I am obliged to advise the House, though, that the opposition leader is no friend of the Gladstone community. As treasurer in the Newman government, the member for Clayfield proposed the sale of the Gladstone Ports Corporation, one of Gladstone's most successful and profitable government owned corporations which controls the Port of Gladstone, the single most important piece of economic infrastructure in Central Queensland and one of Australia's leading ports.

The attempted sale was one of the greatest pieces of economic folly ever proposed by a Queensland government. It would have handed monopolistic power to a consortia of private enterprise with little interest in doing what the management and workforce of the Gladstone Ports Corporation has been doing for decades—generating jobs and prosperity within Central Queensland and maximising the economic return to the state, not profits to private shareholders.

At the last state election, the Gladstone community delivered its verdict on the member for Clayfield's proposed port sale with a 25 per cent swing to Labor—yes, a 25 per cent swing. Labor's victory last year enabled the 760 port authority employees, who have immense pride in their jobs, to refocus their efforts back on efficiently serving coal shippers through the port's coal terminals and to assist the \$35 billion LNG projects approved under a previous Labor government commence shipments of this massive new export earner for Queensland.

There is no doubt that, if the LNP and the member for Clayfield were given the opportunity in the future, the sale of the Gladstone port would be back on the agenda. The word on the street was that the Newman government advisers were predicting a \$5 billion to \$7 billion outcome from the sale of the port and former treasurer Nicholls could not wait to get his hands on the proceeds.

However, the money is only half the issue. Anyone who has listened to the speeches of the member for Clayfield over the years would know that private ownership and operation of public assets is at the heart of LNP policy and is in its DNA. He truly believes that all government services can be better delivered through private providers. In his deluded view, the role of the government is simply to legislate and regulate and let private organisations run our schools, our hospitals and our ports. A clear example of this was in 2014 when the then treasurer ripped up a 99-year contract entered into three years earlier for the port authority's operation of the Wiggins Island coal terminal, in turn destroying a range of cost and supply chain efficiencies which would have financially benefited the beleaguered Central Queensland coal industry.