



Speech By  
**Tim Nicholls**


**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 10 May 2016

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Liberal National Party**

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.38 am): I first want to take this opportunity to thank my LNP colleagues for the trust they have placed in me in electing me to the position of Leader of the Opposition here in Queensland. As I travel around this great state and stop to talk to people, whether it is on the street, in the coffee shops or at the local school, they ask me what is happening in Queensland. They are concerned Queensland is grinding to a halt and they are concerned that that is a direct result of a government which was elected with no plan for growing the economy or delivering the jobs that Queenslanders need. Thousands of Queenslanders used to go to work every day without worrying about what this government would be doing to them but that has clearly changed. Queenslanders are unsure whether their minority government, held up by the Katters and Independents, is going to look after them or their union bosses.

We have seen again this morning that this government has an open-door policy, as long as you are a union boss, a factional power broker, a donor or a former staffer turned lobbyist. Queenslanders rightly want to know how the Labor government is transitioning the Queensland economy from the mining boom to a more diversified economy with greater opportunities for all Queenslanders. Queenslanders are being let down, and Labor has no plan to manage the transition of the Queensland economy, grow jobs or invest in the services Queenslanders need and deserve.

The LNP is determined to get Queensland moving. The LNP shadow cabinet team that I have announced brings the right mix of experience, energy, enthusiasm and new ideas combined with a deep understanding of the issues affecting all Queenslanders from Cape York to Coolangatta and from Brisbane to Bedourie. The LNP understands that a strong economy is the foundation of a more prosperous Queensland. A thriving economy supports the jobs, growth and opportunities that Queenslanders want and deserve. A strong economy will allow the people of our state to fulfil their aspirations rather than being left worried and directionless, as they are by this Labor Party government.

The economic team that I announced earlier this week comprises myself and my deputy, the member for Nanango, and the shadow Treasurer and shadow minister for small business, the member for Indooroopilly, signifying the importance we place on the small business sector. There are 410,000 small businesses which employ the vast majority of Queenslanders the length and breadth of the state, and we will support small business. We will not create a government owned monolithic corporation to compete with them, as this Labor government choses to do. The shadow minister for employment, industrial relations, skills and training, the member for Kawana, will sharpen the focus of this team to ensure that we bring together those vital portfolios not only to look at what is occurring in the education sector but also to bring together skills training and job opportunities in a clear policy area.

The shadow natural resources and mines minister, the member for Hinchinbrook, will continue his great role in advocating for the resources sector, which is one of the foundations of Queensland's great economy. The shadow transport and main roads minister, the member for Glass House, will bring together his experience of traveling throughout the state, and of course there is the shadow Attorney-General, the member for Mansfield. The shadow tourism minister, the member for Beaudesert, will no doubt bring great enthusiasm to his role as he goes around the state visiting a multitude of tourism hotspots, starting off in his own electorate with the beautiful Scenic Rim, which is a magnet for tourists the length and breadth of Australia.

We have the shadow agriculture minister, the member for Burdekin. Yesterday I said there are some shadow ministers I will have to hold back. I think I will need both hands on the reins and both feet on the brakes to hold back the member for Burdekin with his enthusiasm for the agriculture sector. I expect that we will all be hearing more from the shadow minister for energy, biofuels and water, the member for Burleigh. This strong team will focus on plans and policies to build a more diverse and robust Queensland economy now and for future generations.

I have already highlighted the importance of small business to the Queensland economy and the hard work of millions of small business owners. As I have indicated, that is why we combined those portfolios: to hold Labor to account for its lack of action in that sector. The congestion in infrastructure that Queensland needs to get products to market and people to work on time will be the focus of the deputy opposition leader and also the shadow transport minister, the member for Glass House. The member for Aspley will lead the vital portfolio of education for the LNP and continue the reforms that we instigated, including independent public schools, which has been so welcomed by parents and educators throughout the state. We will focus more on outcomes rather than inputs, as this Labor Party does. We will work to ensure that our students are the best in the nation.

The rapidly changing nature of work resulting from the shift away from the mining boom provides many challenges to the way Queensland needs to think about employment now and into the future. The jobs of tomorrow and the technological advances that make innovation possible will be the focus of the member for Mount Ommaney as she takes on her role as shadow science, innovation and digital economy minister. The agricultural sector is already well-recognised for its importance to Queensland and the member for Burdekin, as I have said, will be a champion for that sector. With his family background in cane farming and cattle, along with many other interests, he will bring energy, understanding and experience to the role of the LNP's shadow agriculture portfolio.

North Queensland will continue to receive strong representation around the shadow cabinet table, with fierce advocates like the member for Hinchinbrook, who is possibly the biggest Cowboys fan in the House, although I am not sure that that would stand up against the member for Whitsunday's claim.

**An opposition member:** Ask Mander about the Cowboys.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Yes. Honourable members can be assured that there will be vigorous debate and presentation of the arguments for North Queensland with people like the member for Hinchinbrook, the member for Whitsunday and the member for Burdekin all strongly representing North Queensland. I look forward to the continued role of the member for Whitsunday as he represents us so ably across the north of this great state.

Queensland is a place of natural beauty and wonder with an abundance of environmental heritage. The protection of our natural environment for future generations is critical to both our economy and the lifestyle that we all enjoy, which is so much envied by those from not only other parts of Australia but also around the world. In recognition of the importance of the environment to all Queenslanders, the member for Moggill has been appointed the shadow minister for environment and heritage protection, national parks and the Great Barrier Reef. I have no doubt that he will be a fierce advocate for the environment in the shadow cabinet. He will continue the LNP's balanced approach to the protection of Queensland's unique environmental values which allow all of us to enjoy the great environment we have here in Queensland while ensuring that sensible economic development can continue.

The provision of quality and timely health services is critical to all Queensland families, and we have put together an impressive team to take up the fight to this clueless Labor government. In saying that, I want to acknowledge the tremendous work that was done by the member for Southern Downs in his time as health minister and that was continued in opposition by his successor, the member for Caloundra, in continuing policies that ensure things like the dental health waiting list, which was sitting at over 7,500 people waiting more than two years to see a dentist, was reduced to zero in our term in government—

**Mr Springborg:** Sixty-three thousand.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Sixty-three thousand? Thank you, member for Southern Downs, I correct myself. Initiatives such as the wait-time guarantee were introduced so that we could deliver the services that people wanted at a time that was medically appropriate and in line with medical recommendations and which importantly, for the first time in a decade, saw the Health budget balanced. We delivered the services that Queenslanders need at a price they could pay, and we eliminated all the dodgies of the past including the biggest public administration failure in Queensland's political history: the Health payroll bungle. I know that, with his experience, the member for Surfers Paradise will be able to continue policies to ensure we deliver the right services.

The member for Mudgeeraba, with her personal experience, will do a tremendous job in her portfolio and the member for Burnett, a former QBuild employee, will take on the important task of highlighting Labor's mismanagement of the Housing and Public Works portfolio. We recognise and acknowledge the thousands of Queenslanders who go to work every day to serve our community, and the member for Everton and the member for Mansfield will continue to fight against the Labor government's watering down of our strong anticriminal gang laws. We are determined to ensure that criminal gangs are not allowed back in business and onto our streets, selling drugs to our children and spreading crime and misery throughout all our communities. The member for Maroochydore will continue her great role in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Multicultural Affairs.

We have pulled together a team that will bring the energy, experience and enthusiasm needed to get Queensland moving again and hold this 'do nothing' Labor government to account.