




Speech By
Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Queen's Birthday Honours List; Queensland Budget

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.32 am): I would like to begin with something I did not address in my three minutes prior to question time. I acknowledge the great number of people who have been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List, which has not been mentioned here today. I noticed some very prominent Queenslanders including Geoffrey Thomas, who has been made an officer of the Order of Australia. Members will recall that he and John Mickel carried out the review of Trade and Investment Queensland which saw it go from a body that, under Labor, had had nine ministers in almost 10 separate departments in the previous 10 years to a stand-alone authority now representing Queensland throughout the world effectively on a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week basis. To Geoffrey Thomas we say congratulations. Trevor St Baker has done a tremendous amount within the gas and energy industry.

Mr McArdle interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: I take the interjection from the member for Caloundra. We have all had dealings with Trevor. He has really been at the forefront of the industry, and he is not shy in letting people know his views on how the industry should go.

Mr Emerson interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: Yes, and a constituent of the member for Indooroopilly. I also recognise Geoff Rodgers, Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia in the General Division. Geoff started his business Rowland 30 years ago and has built it up around the world. Other worthy awardees and recipients include: Mike Byrne from the Catholic Education Commission; Mark Stoneman, a former member of this House; and public servants such as Pat Vidgen. I join with all Queenslanders in congratulating them on their awards.

The closer we get to the budget this afternoon the more obvious this government's lack of an economic plan has become. The evidence of their lack of an overarching economic narrative is no starker than in the releases, the leaks and the signals we have seen from this government over the last week and a half. Already this budget is shaping up as another budget of broken promises where the Palaszczuk Labor government walks away from its election promises and walks away from Queenslanders. It builds on the short-sightedness and hollow log rage we saw in the 2015-16 state budget.

In that budget, those opposite tried every stopgap solution at their disposal in an attempt to hide their fiscal ineptitude. They made promises going into the last election that they were never going to be able to keep. What is the more heinous part of that crime is they knew they were never going to be able

to keep them when they made them. They knew that they could not keep their promises at the time they made them, and that did not stop them—like all Labor governments—from continuing to mislead the people in a desperate bid to grab votes.

They promised that they were going to use funds from the GOCs to pay down debt and they have failed to do so. In response we have seen raids on super and long service leave, a \$4 billion debt and a plan to strip all retained earnings out of the GOCs, and that was never mentioned or put forward by the Premier as opposition leader or the Treasurer as shadow Treasurer. Never once did they say that they would raid super; that they would raid long service; that they would move \$4 billion worth of debt; nor did they say they would strip all the retained earnings out of the GOCs.

The state's independent Auditor-General has seen the raids and called them for what they are: a short-term strategy. He challenged the government to find a more permanent solution to address the state's growing debt burden, and unfortunately this is advice that the Premier and the Treasurer have not heeded. This budget continues to deliver more of the same short-sightedness. It includes measures to help prop up Labor's short-term electoral prospects through one-off sugar hits. It has no long-term plan for growing the Queensland economy and securing a brighter financial future for our state.

No matter which way you look at it, the government has failed. Queenslanders are not receiving jobs; jobs are down. Since the last budget, 20,000 full-time jobs have been lost. Since the last budget the number of Queenslanders in unemployment has grown by 11,500, and the youth unemployment rate has increased from 13.2 per cent to 15 per cent. We have a government that makes promises about jobs, but is so inept that it has failed to establish its own board for a signature promise: the \$40 million Jobs Queensland agency. The Queensland economy has shrunk in every single quarter under this government. This government has no plan. Only the LNP can get Queensland moving.