



Speech By  
**Tim Nicholls**


**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Business and Industry**

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (12.07 pm): At the outset can I say thank you to those who supported the motion that we just passed in this House to have this matter dealt with urgently. This is a matter of considerable urgency for the people of regional Queensland. It is needed to bring the long-running stalemate between Wilmar Sugar and QSL to an end.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition is now anticipating a debate that is before the House.

**Mr Cripps:** Not at all. He was reflecting on the urgency motion.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** We have just dealt with that. There is not another question to be dealt with. I suggest you give some guidance to the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Crawford): Leader of the Opposition, as I am sure you are aware, you cannot anticipate debate on the sugar bill, so I ask you to make sure that you are—

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I will not be anticipating debate on the sugar bill. I was simply thanking people for supporting the urgency motion. Unlike my honourable friend over there, the member for Sandgate, I had an extra three years of tuition in this place, so I am very aware of the rules of procedure here in this House. I thank him for his attempt at guidance and I acknowledge that it was meant in my very own best interest, but let me carry on as to why it is important to thank people for the urgency that has been accorded to the bill—and I will not touch on the subject matter of the bill. I will reflect on what has occurred to farming families in Queensland over the last three years as a result of the bill not being put before the House. I will reflect on the families—

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. If the Leader of the Opposition is now going to reflect upon the impacts of a bill not being in place in the state of Queensland then clearly he is debating the substance of the bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, I am inclined to agree. I will caution you again. Do not anticipate debate on the bill that will be coming before the House.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I will not be anticipating that debate. Given the sensitivities of the Leader of the House in relation to the inaction of his government to address the significant issues concerning Queenslanders in this debate, I will not address the substance of the bill which goes, of course, to the dispute between the millers and the marketers in relation to it.

Let me reflect on my week on the road listening to Queenslanders including my visit to the Burdekin and the canegrowers of Burdekin. Since we last met we have been travelling the state, as we said we would. We have been talking with and listening to Queenslanders about the issues that concern them. One thing that has come through loud and clear is that many believe this government is not listening to their concerns. They believe Queensland is stagnating and that the community is crying out for leadership at a time when we have a government firmly stuck in neutral. All Queenslanders are

getting from this government is review after review, and inaction and instability as Labor ministers show they are more interested in their own jobs than they are in the jobs of Queenslanders. They are prepared to sell out their local communities to advance their own careers.

Last weekend I visited Chinchilla and I attended the melon festival. I am glad that I am being followed around the state by the Deputy Premier, who is posting those photos, because I can tell members one thing: there was no-one from the ALP in Chinchilla. They were nowhere to be seen. Another great agricultural industry, the melon industry, the home of which is Chinchilla, is being ignored by Labor. It was great to talk to Mayor Paul McVeigh about his ideas for expanding growth in Chinchilla. The Western Downs Regional Council are grasping the nettle. They are doing it themselves. They are not asking for handouts from the government. They are getting on with developing the melon festival and a number of other tourism initiatives including the potential for a museum. All they want is the government and government owned businesses to talk to them, but all they are getting is a brick wall. I want to particularly acknowledge the melon festival president, Doug McNally, for getting me in to the melon-eating competition. I want to thank him for the particularly good melon that he provided to me. On conclusion he said to me, 'Mate, that one was so bad, I wouldn't have eaten it.' There you go, but it was great fun and everyone had a wonderful weekend.

On the Gold Coast last week I had the pleasure to meet with Logan River prawn farmers impacted by white spot. I mentioned that in my contribution when I introduced the bill around sugar marketing. They included Noel Herbst from Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture; Ian and Geoff Rossman from GI Rural; Daniel and Simon Rossman from DS Farms; the Truloffs representing TPF; the Zipfs from Rocky Point Prawn Farms; and others. White spot is now in all seven farms along the river and more than \$25 million worth of prawns have had to be destroyed since November. This industry is worth \$88 million a year to the Queensland economy. More importantly, it represents the jobs and livelihoods of dozens of workers—almost 120 employees—who are being kept on by those employers at the moment, but for how much longer is the question. The farms need certainty. They need the minister to give them certainty about whether they can re-establish and the terms upon which they can re-establish. That is the first thing. Let them know whether they can re-establish their farms. They are still waiting for that. We call on the minister to make that decision and to give those farmers certainty because they need to know now in order to be able to plan, buy and commence restocking.

We welcome the suspension of the importation of green prawns into Australia and the fast-tracking of the Farm Household Allowance support for affected farmers. While those things are good, they do not go the whole way to helping resolve these issues. It is an important issue and we will await the results of the Senate inquiry to get to the bottom of what went wrong. We stand ready and willing to help those farmers re-establish themselves.

Another Gold Coast business that we visited was Dreamworld. Of course we remember the shocking events that occurred there in October last year, and we remember the four people who died there—Roozi Araghi, Cindy Low, Kate Goodchild and Luke Dorsett. As law-makers and parliamentarians, we should make sure we do everything in our power to ensure that that tragedy does not occur again. However, we also must recognise the importance of Dreamworld and the other theme parks to local tourism as they provide jobs and opportunities for so many Queenslanders.

Tourism is vital to the Gold Coast economy, providing thousands of jobs, but at a time when we have seen more than 4,000 jobs lost on the Gold Coast in the last year we should be providing whatever support we can to the tourism industry. That is why we announced our wi-fi for tourism policy—a policy that makes Queensland an absolute must-see for tourists around the world. We want to make Queensland a No. 1 tourism destination for Australia. To do that, we need a plan to enhance the tourism experience for interstate and international visitors. Our policy will provide up to 500 wi-fi hotspots in key tourism destinations around Queensland so we can capitalise on an amazing range of natural and man-made tourism settings unique to Queensland that set our state apart.

I also travelled to the Sunshine Coast last week, another area that relies heavily on tourism and that has been hit hard by Labor's economic mismanagement, with a thousand jobs disappearing from the region last month. Despite the efforts of the local council, we have seen almost 8,000 jobs disappear from the Sunshine Coast in just one year while another 10,600 people have given up looking for work as the participation rate plummets.

We heard how hard it is for young people looking to get a start in their first job and for businesses looking to employ new staff. In the last year, more than 5,000 young kids have disappeared from the Sunshine Coast and another 5,100 young people have given up looking for work. The youth unemployment rate has increased by more than two per cent. What is this government's answer to this problem? It is to implement a Back to Work program that businesses on the Sunshine Coast cannot access. It does not apply on the Sunshine Coast. Unlike Labor, which has forgotten young jobseekers on the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast and Ipswich, our \$100 million plan to get Queensland working

and create up to 20,000 jobs applies right across the state without fear or favour. Everyone can apply for it. Our plan will also reduce the cost of working for young apprentices and incentivise businesses to train and retain young Queenslanders. That is just one policy we have put forward to get Queensland moving and make a change that is important to Queenslanders.

Another chance I had to speak about policy was while visiting Noosa, and that was the LNP's container deposit scheme—another scheme being ripped off by the Labor Party. Where was it? It was languishing in the doldrums with a do-nothing minister. Perhaps he was looking for a fresh environment to move to—an environment where he could pronounce the name of his electorate. He was looking to plough new fields. Our policy will make a change and we outlined how that scheme would work while visiting the Noosa Council's Eumundi Road Resource and Recovery Centre. We have been way out in front of Labor on this issue. After two years of dragging the chain, including a 12-month—guess what?—feasibility investigation, the best Labor could do a couple of weeks ago was release—guess what?—another discussion paper about possible implementation options. That is a government that is getting on with the job: a 12-month feasibility investigation followed by a discussion paper about possible options! No wonder it took him so long to decide which seat he will run for. He cannot even implement a policy. He cannot make a decision and just say, 'We're going to do it.'

*(Time expired)*