




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BUDERIM

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QUEENSLAND FUTURE FUND BILL

ROYALTY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (4.11 pm): I rise to speak in the cognate debate of the Royalty Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 and the Queensland Future Fund Bill 2020. I will restrict my comments to the Queensland Future Fund Bill because there are some important areas that we need to address.

Let's be clear: this farcical proposal from the Palaszczuk Labor government is nothing more than a political tool designed to trick the Queensland public into believing they are doing something to manage Queensland's ballooning government debt—debt ballooning to more than \$100 billion in the not-too-distant future. It contains a proposal to raid another billion dollars from the employment benefits of public servants like teachers, police and health workers—another billion dollar raid on top of the \$2 billion raid on their defined benefit scheme that we saw in the past; another \$2 billion from suspending employer contributions to the defined benefit scheme; then \$3.4 billion from raiding the long service leave benefits of public servants. That is \$8.4 billion and counting of Queensland public servant employment benefits that supposedly this worker-representative Palaszczuk Labor government has raided and will raid to address its own failures of economic management.

Mr Hart: Where did it go?

Mr MICKELBERG: Good question, member for Burleigh. Where did it go? The other key asset to be contributed to the Future Fund is the titles office, which is supposed to be valued at more than \$4 billion. How the Treasurer arrives at this valuation has me pretty puzzled. I have been playing around over the last day or so with various discounted cash flow valuations, trying to work out how anyone would want to buy a \$51.958 million—call it \$52 million—revenue stream for \$4 billion. I was even more puzzled when I had a look at the valuation of the same assets in New South Wales and in Victoria. If we focus on New South Wales for a minute, their land titles registry was divested by the government for \$2.6 billion, and it had an annual revenue of around \$130 million. An asset with revenue more than 2½ times the Queensland equivalent sold for only 65 per cent of the valuation proposed by the Treasurer. It simply does not stack up.

The only assumption I can make is that the Treasurer has a secret plan to drastically increase land title fees and charges for all Queenslanders—fees and charges like title search fees, mortgage registration fees, discharge of mortgage fees and land transfer fees. These are fees and charges that will disproportionately affect families, small businesses and those who are just trying to get ahead.

An opposition member: Just another tax.

Mr MICKELBERG: I take that interjection: just another tax on top of the nine we have already seen. I call on the Treasurer to be open with Queenslanders. Does the Treasurer have a secret plan to drastically increase government fees and charges again, or is he using creative accounting to mislead Queenslanders?

In relation to the committee submissions on the Future Fund bill, I found the comments that eminent economist Mr Gene Tunny made to the committee most interesting. He said—

While the long-term goal of paying down debt is admirable, the Queensland Future Fund is unnecessary and undesirable. It would lock up funds and reduce the flexibility of the Government to manage its budget and balance sheet in the best interests of Queenslanders.

He also submitted—

The Queensland Future Fund is no substitute for a medium-term fiscal strategy aimed at stabilising and (eventually reducing) the debt-to-revenue and debt-to-GSP ratios. It is still unclear what the Government's current medium-term fiscal strategy is, given a budget update has not been produced since December. I would reiterate the desirability of a budget update being provided as soon as possible, and well before September.

I agree. Queensland is crying out for any fiscal strategy, let alone a medium-term fiscal strategy. The Treasurer, like his two predecessors, likes to take the approach of burying his head in the sand. It is almost like Labor think they can blow the budget and rack up debt at a rapid rate and the LNP will come into government and fix the problem for them. Surely that is not Labor's strategy. Surely no self-respecting government with a ballooning debt issue would ignore that problem.

I know that the shadow Treasurer has a plan to stabilise the debt and to grow our economy so that we can drag ourselves back from the edge of the debt cliff that we are teetering on. It is only the LNP that have a plan to govern for all Queenslanders, to stabilise and pay down debt and to get Queensland working again. The vision of our leader, Deb Frecklington, is to make Queensland Australia's economic powerhouse again, and that is what is needed in order to get the Queensland economy going. It needs to be the best place to get a job and to get ahead. We will implement the LNP's plan to stimulate the economy and to create a decade of secure jobs, get Queenslanders working again and drag Queensland out of the recession it is in. Our plan for a stronger economy and secure jobs is about investing for growth, supercharging the regions, unleashing Queensland industries and securing our children's future.

Only the LNP will build a stronger economy and create a decade of stronger jobs. That is what is needed to get Queensland's debt under control. A plan is what is needed. It is what is lacking from this Palaszczuk Labor government. We have not seen a budget for nearly 16 months. It is absolutely beyond a joke. Queenslanders deserve better. I look forward to an LNP government being able to implement a budget and a fiscal strategy that will get Queensland's debt under control and get Queensland working again in November.