




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Record of Proceedings, 8 September 2020

MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Liberal National Party, Economic Management

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.10 pm): This week the government announced even more job-creating stimulus investment—new investment that will create jobs across Queensland as we unite and recover from COVID-19. It is part of our thorough and detailed economic plan—an economic plan that we can only implement because of our strong health response, one of the best in the world. It is detailed and costed and will create jobs while keeping Queenslanders safe. In contrast, the LNP has revealed it has a secret plan to cut jobs to pay for its \$23 billion of promises. The member for Nanango says—

Mr Lister: Why don't you table it?

Dr MILES: I will quote her. Hang on.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Pause the clock. Member for Southern Downs, you are warned.

Dr MILES: The member for Nanango said yesterday that she will pay for her \$23 billion worth of promises by getting rid of waste. Right now there are thousands of frontline health staff wondering if they are the waste that the LNP wants to get rid of. I am sure the people of Queensland would like to know exactly what she considers 'waste' in our healthcare sector. Is it the 2,450 doctors we have hired since we took over? Is it the 7,359 nurses and midwives we have hired? Is it the 1,758 health professionals or the 720 extra ambos that they think are waste? Each and every one of them is a Queenslanders wondering if they are the waste the LNP wants to get rid of, whether they will again be the victims of another cruel LNP sacking spree.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that he would get expenses under control. Well, expenses are nurses. Expenses are doctors. Expenses are healthcare services. That is what government expenses are. When he says that he will get them under control, he means that he will sack them. That is what he means.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Direct your comments through the chair, please, Deputy Premier.

Dr MILES: The economics brains trust on the other side of the chamber said that he would stimulate the economy by cutting. I will lend the member for Everton a first-year economics textbook to swear on, but you do not stimulate the economy by cutting. LNP members should have learned that when they were last in government. Campbell Newman's cruel cuts put people out of work. In fact, we had only just reversed the unemployment they created between 2012 and 2015. We had only just got back to the low level of unemployment we had at the start of 2012.

When will we learn the details of the secret plan of those opposite to cut health services, to sack nurses and doctors? The member for Everton said that he will outline them during the election campaign. That is too late. Our hardworking health staff deserve to know if their necks are on the LNP's chopping block well before then. It is the only way the LNP can possibly fund \$23 billion worth of promises. There is no such thing as a magic pudding.

Those opposite say that they will not increase taxes and will not increase debt. The only other way to do it is by cutting expenses. Most expenses are staff. A third of expenses are in health. In 2012 they promised not to cut health staff, right before they sacked 14,000 Queenslanders including 4,400 health staff including 1,800 nurses and midwives. They cut 177 preventive health staff in the public health units, the very people keeping us safe right now. They cut \$3.8 million in funding from NGOs like the Red Cross. They left 104,000 Queenslanders not on a waiting list but on a waiting list just to get on the waiting list. They cut \$36 million from 153 health service projects run by NGOs like Diabetes Queensland, Drug Arm, the Eating Disorders Association, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Lung Foundation, the Kidney Support Network, Mission Australia, Lupus Australia and the National Heart Foundation. The list goes on and on and on. They cut \$45 million from mental health. They have never apologised to the families of the Barrett patients who lost their lives. They sacked 40 people from the Patient Safety Unit.

It is very clear that those opposite are just planning to dust off Campbell Newman's plan, because the only way to fund their \$32 billion of promises is to sack the very health staff who have kept Queensland safe, just like they did last time.