




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Queensland Economy

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.15 pm): I rise this afternoon to speak about some things that are very relevant to our economy. This week we received results that tell us business confidence, as low as it was before the coronavirus, has fallen off a cliff. Is it any wonder that business confidence is at rock bottom when you look at the performance of the government, particularly in the last week? Is it any wonder businesses have no confidence when they have a new Treasurer who has been a senior minister for five years in two terms of government and who, in a train wreck of an interview with Karl Stefanovic, could not tell us what the state debt was. This morning he tried to make a joke of it saying, 'I needed to look at my notes.' You could ask every member of this parliament what is the state debt at this moment and they would be able to answer in an instant. This Treasurer—similar to his boss, the Premier, who did not know the GST rate—did not know the level of debt. As a senior minister it is absolutely embarrassing to admit that he needed notes for that type of figure.

Is it any wonder that business has no confidence in this state government when we look at what the new Treasurer has done with Virgin over the last week and a little bit before that as well? It is a company that is 90 per cent foreign owned—a company that last year lost \$371 million, the year before lost \$300 million, the year before that lost \$545 million and the three years before that combined lost \$190 million. That is not a great track record financially. What responsible treasurer would commit \$200 million to try to rescue this company when, two days later, it went into administration? If they or somebody else had taken up that offer, \$200 million of taxpayers' money would have gone down the drain. In another interview on the same morning he thought he was on a roll. He was asked at Channel 7, 'Will you make any money with this venture?' His response was, 'It's not about making a commercial return.' What planet does this Treasurer live on?

Mr Bleijie: 'Labornomics'.

Mr MANDER: 'Labornomics', I will take that interjection. What have we seen now? The Brookfield Infrastructure Group—the group that the government align themselves with—got out of it. They realise it is not something they want to play with, yet this minister will continue misleading Queensland workers who think he can save their jobs. If another airline comes back, it will come back because there is a demand for it. We need to have a second airline in this state. It will come back because of private investment and it will be a lot smaller than it is now. That is why Virgin got into trouble in the first place: it outgrew itself. Is it any wonder business does not have confidence when they see those types of decisions being made?

Is it any wonder there is no business confidence in this state when they come out with their Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs plan. It is eight pages—one of the pages is blank and the other page is the cover—of fluff and reannouncements. There is a picture of beef cattle on the front page and one mention of agriculture. It is not an initiative; it is just saying it is a traditional industry of Queensland, which of course it is.

This is what this government is all about. It is all about show. It has announced a recovery industry forum. I wonder if that is similar to the Premier's business advisory council that did not meet for two years and then when they did meet I think the Premier did not turn up. This is what this government does. It makes announcements with no backup whatsoever. Is there anybody better suited to the Treasury role in a government that is all about show and no-go than the member for Woodridge, who was described by David Hinchliffe, the former deputy mayor of Brisbane, as a 'gormless show pony'? That is what he is. He came in this morning with this great rallying cry. I think *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* was on in the background so he could really pump it up. He is all show and no-go. Queensland deserves better and it is only an LNP government that will deliver it.

(Time expired)