




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

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DEBT REDUCTION AND SAVINGS BILL

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (2.47 pm): I like following clairvoyants; they might be able to tell us the future. I rise in support of the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021. The Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021 will implement a range of debt reduction and savings measures identified as part of the Palaszczuk government's savings and debt plan. These include establishing the legislative mechanism to transfer the Queensland Titles Registry to the Queensland Future Fund and abolishing or restructuring a number of public entities. The bill implements public sector efficiency and modernisation measures, including allowing digital advertising to replace print advertising and establishing a fee unit model to manage government fees.

This is where it gets interesting, because the problem the LNP has with this bill is the Titles Registry. It is salivating because that is something that it wanted to sell off if it got back into power in 2020. It saw what happened to its friends in New South Wales who sold it off at a bargain price, so it was salivating. One thing I have noticed from listening to the speeches today from my opponents is that they love to put public money in private pockets. That is what they love. They love to look after their mates, and that is what this is all about. That is why they are opposing this bill. They know that this is a good bill, but in their DNA they do not want to support it because they know that they cannot sell off the Titles Registry to their mates. That is the problem. If we listen to them, they say that they are the economic managers of the state and they talk about how good they are. If they were any good, they would not just have 32 seats in this House.

It is interesting listening to those on the other side say they should be in government. Are they saying Queenslanders are fools? My impression is that they are saying Queenslanders made a mistake. In all the years I have been in politics I have found that the voters do not usually get it wrong. They get it right. Those opposite are on 32 seats. They are like lemmings going off a cliff. Let me tell members what happened the last time the LNP were in power in Queensland. Let me put the coat on and get in the TARDIS. Let us go back to 2012-2015.

Mr Harper: Do we need to go back to that horror story again? It was a nightmare.

Mr SAUNDERS: I will take that interjection from the member for Thuringowa. It was Newman on Elm Street. It was supposed to be Freddy Krueger, only it was Campbell Newman coming out and attacking the people of Queensland. Let us have a look at what these economic managers did when they were in power. I am talking about the Wide Bay Burnett area. There were 345 hospital and health jobs, including 120 nurses and midwives, taken out of the Bundaberg, Maryborough, Hervey Bay, Gayndah, Mundubbera, Eidsvold, Monto and Biggenden hospitals. There were 19 QBuild workers sacked in Maryborough and Bundaberg. They were part of 322 QBuild workers sacked across this state. Those opposite sit there and say they are economic managers. They do not understand what damage that did to regional and rural Queensland. This government is a very good government for regional and rural Queensland.

Let us continue to look at what happened in the Freddy Newman era. They sacked 14,000 public servants. We can sit here and talk about it, but it was very different when you were a part of it and saw the horror of what families went through. I remember, in particular, friends of mine who were long-serving public servants who had to go home to their partners and tell them that they had lost their jobs. Those opposite do not represent regional communities anymore. Many of these public servants are giving people: they give to their local sporting organisation or are involved in their local historical society. They are public servants because they give back to their local community. We lost those people in our community. Our community is starting to rebuild. It has taken many years to rebuild the trust in regional Queensland.

I was with the member for Hervey Bay at the Fraser Coast Regional Show. Those opposite talk about being economic managers, but there were not too many at their stall at the show. There were 4,400 health workers sacked. One of the reasons I stood in the 2015 election was because the LNP cut the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. It is a fantastic program. I have seen young people in my electorate get employed through Skilling Queenslanders for Work. It is a top program. Those opposite do not care about employment. In the 2020 election they were going to slash \$368 million in grants to the Department of Communities to support Queenslanders; \$120 million in funding to community groups from Queensland Health. They cut health programs. We know they have no heart. When I tour the state and talk to councils, they cannot talk enough about how good the Palaszczuk government has been to local government. The mayor of Boulia tells me what a great program Works for Queensland is.

Those opposite axed the Tenants Advisory Service. They cut the Premier's Literary Awards, which was a couple of hundred thousand dollars. That is how lousy those opposite are. They come in here and lecture us about being economic managers. Those opposite shut schools. It was distressing to read that they cut \$106,000 from the Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland. Shame! They cut \$100,000 from the Pyjama Foundation; \$100,000 from the Community Emergency Support Centre; \$46,000 from Bravehearts—and they tell us they want to protect young people!

Mr Harper: Heartless!

Mr SAUNDERS: They are heartless. They cut \$47,000 from the Centre Against Sexual Violence. They cut \$33,000 from the Banana Shire Emergency Accommodation Support Centre. Where was the former member for Callide, the Deputy Premier, when that happened? He had a lot to say over the years, but I do not think he would have had too much to say about that. They cut \$200,000 from Vision Australia. My family has had to use Vision Australia.

Turning to the Public Safety Business Agency, I reiterate what the minister said. Its employees are happy to see the end of the PSBA. They were buying vehicles for Queensland police that were not suitable for the police. They were buying vehicles for other government departments that were not suitable. My friends in the PSBA cracked a beer and are very happy they are going back now to the relevant departments. They are happy because they know they have tenure of employment now.

Those opposite want to privatise the correction centres in this state. It is in their DNA. The reason they want to do that is that, just like in America, it is more public money in their mates' pockets. We have some of the best correctional centres in the world. They are well run and well staffed and we have great officers.

Mr Hunt: Hear, hear!

Mr SAUNDERS: I take that interjection from the member for Caloundra with whom I worked closely with corrections. Our correction centres are about rehabilitation. They are about getting people ready to get back on the street after they have done their time. The model those opposite want to put forward is putting money in their mates' pockets and makes the officers beg for their wages. We saw that before the 2020 election.

The Palaszczuk government has been one of the best governments that we have had for regional Queensland. I travel regional Queensland in my new role and talk to many regional Queenslanders, and they are telling me they have not seen a government as good as this in many years. The member for Pine Rivers also travels regional Queensland in her role and talks to many people. Everywhere we go we look around at the road infrastructure and what we are spending in regional Queensland. Those opposite came out with a chainsaw and cut RoadTek in half.

We are reinvesting in regional Queensland. We are supporting jobs in regional Queensland. We are supporting health care in regional Queensland. We are looking after our schools in regional Queensland. We are the economic managers of this state. We are not trying to put public money into private pockets. Those opposite cut, sack and sell. It runs through their veins. It is imprinted on them. It is in their DNA—one does not need the CSI to come and look at that, we can all see it. I commend the bill to the House.