




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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DEBT REDUCTION AND SAVINGS BILL

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (4.14 pm): It is always a delight to follow Steve Dickson's understudy. What a wonderful performance! Even his own side were laughing at him! It was a pleasure to behold. I rise to speak in support of the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021. When I was elected in 2015, I committed to my community that I would work hard to represent and protect them and the needs of our community. That is why I support this bill. It is all about protecting Queensland from the LNP agenda to cut, sack and sell. We are about creating jobs.

When I was elected, my community was really hurting because of the terrible LNP cuts. My community told me that they wanted to see good, sustainable frontline jobs that are focused, relevant and meet the needs and expectations of the community. Labor makes sensible, prudent savings in a way that does not hurt Queenslanders. The savings that this bill supports will ensure that our frontline services will meet those expectations of my community.

The LNP hate this idea. When the LNP talk savings, what they mean is cuts. We in the bayside know all about that. When the LNP say that these savings are not enough, what they really are saying is that they want to see hard cuts or, like the good member for Chatsworth calls it—and I use the word 'good' ironically—tough love. Yes, that is their attitude.

In government they cut the infrastructure spend to record lows. They cut 14,000 public servants, including 4,000 health workers and 1,800 midwives, all with no regard for the impact these cuts would have on my community. A bunch of privileged LNP members, some of whom still sit in this chamber, just decided, 'Yep, this will go. Yeah, let's get rid of that service. Let's cut this. Let's sell that.' They did not discriminate and it affected the young, the elderly, the unemployed, the disadvantaged and the bereaved. Let's not forget the impact on local business and industry. No-one was safe. That is how they managed the economy. If the service supported the people who did not vote for them, they got rid of it. They punished people they knew were not their voters. That is how they rolled: they punished people for not voting for them.

Under the LNP government, baysiders not only suffered; we were punished. We lost so many frontline workers that are so important to any community, because the LNP cut them. That is what the member for Chatsworth would call tough love. A child safety office—closed; department of housing—closed; Bayside tenancy advice service—closed; Caravan and Manufactured Home Residents Association—closed. I was an advocacy and advice worker at CAMRA working with some of the most vulnerable members of our community, living in caravan parks and manufactured homes. These residents were just abandoned by the LNP. It is shameful.

Wynnum Hospital was reduced to a healthcare centre, with a huge reduction in health services such as mental health—no surprise there as we know they are really good at that in terms of the Barrett centre—social work, podiatry and physiotherapy, to name just a few. All of those services were ripped out of my community and there was a huge reduction in palliative care services.

Let us not forget the axing of the successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. This successful program returned \$8 for every \$1 spent. Perhaps the most hurtful was the closure of the beloved Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit. Yes, that was shut down, too. This was a functional, accredited

residential care facility. The door slammed shut. Eighty-five residents had to find new homes. Relocating often cost those vulnerable people their lives. The trauma and dismay experienced by these residents and their families is beyond words. You guessed it: it was another cut by the LNP government, a policy orchestrated by those on the other side of this chamber.

I know that I have spoken many times in this House about these cuts, but I will continue to remind Queenslanders of the actions of the previous LNP government. Each time I speak about these cuts I hear from the other side, 'Oh, get over it. That was years ago.' The families of the residents of Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit have not forgotten—nor will I—and I will not let those opposite forget their shameful actions.

Sadly, these attacks were on the most marginalised in my community—the elderly, families, young people, the unemployed and renters—and the architects and perpetrators of these cuts still sit in this House today. The previous LNP government picked on what it thought were easy targets. However, we baysiders are not easy targets and we will not stand for the disgraceful axing of our local services and the total lack of regard for our community.

The great news for baysiders is that the Palaszczuk Labor government is delivering for the bayside and Queensland. Our government is committed to creating jobs, building important infrastructure and growing the economy, and returning important local frontline services and jobs—and that is what this bill is all about, unlike the mantra of those opposite of cut, sack, sell. The loss of the services, the staff and the consumers of these services and the unemployed public servants were a huge blow to our local businesses. With fewer workers in the CBD and less money in the pockets of people for spending, our traders suffered. It was disgraceful.

Thank goodness that the Palaszczuk Labor government sees the value in infrastructure and investing in our future. With the realisation of Gundu Pa, our new community health centre, it provides outstanding public health services. In fact, it provides many clinics and we have seen a 43.1 per cent increase in funding for the Metro South HHS since the bad old days of the LNP. During Palliative Care Week it is important to acknowledge the amazing work of our palliative care team. This again is another delivery by Queensland Health, so I thank the palliative care workers for the outstanding work they do. Those opposite sacked people, closed the Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit and cut services where they were needed most. Some 935 health workers were sacked from the Metro South HHS alone. That is the clear difference between those opposite and the Palaszczuk government. We build services; the LNP cuts them. The Palaszczuk government is all about employing Queenslanders and creating jobs and opportunities, but the LNP wants to cut them. Unlike the LNP, the Palaszczuk government makes sensible savings that do not cut frontline services and do not hurt Queenslanders.

It is no wonder the LNP wants to complain about putting the Titles Registry in the Future Fund because it means that it cannot get its grubby little hands on the Titles Registry and sell it off. The Titles Registry will be secured in public ownership and those opposite will not be able to sell it, and they really hate this idea. The LNP hates the idea that Queensland taxpayers will get the full value of the Titles Registry on our balance sheet. By getting that asset on our balance sheet, offsetting debt, it completely removes the LNP's fake arguments for privatisation. The LNP will not be able to write a dodgy report or a commission of inquiry that recommends it be sold and it will not be able to waste money on privatisation consultant fees for its LNP mates. Let us not forget the Costello report.

People in my community do not support privatisation of the state's strategic assets, and that is why I was elected. Privatisation is in the LNP's DNA. We know it is true because when it was in government it sold—for example, just in my electorate—the Hemmant State School oval. It also tried to sell off our electricity assets and it wasted \$70 million of taxpayers' money on consultants to do so. Under Labor we will always keep our assets because we listened to what our communities had to say.

The bill provides \$3 million in direct savings which arise from savings in board costs, office accommodation and other ancillary costs. \$3 million might not seem a lot to those privileged people in the LNP, but let me tell the House what it means to my community. It could mean the difference between a student at Brisbane Bayside State College attending the new STEM facility that has just been built. It could mean the Wynnum State School's new playground facility. It could mean the Fringe Festival which saw 22 sold out shows and nearly 10,000 visitors to Wynnum last year, or the \$3.5 million Wynnum Ambulance Station. That is just a small example of what \$3 million could fund in my electorate.

Under the LNP government we saw disgraceful, shameful acts and I know that Queenslanders do not want that to ever happen again. In contrast, the Palaszczuk Labor government has adopted the position that we will support and protect our assets and protect workers and frontline services. That is what is different about this side of the House. We have a fair and measured approach to savings. I commend the bill to the House.