




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KURWONGBAH

Record of Proceedings, 26 May 2021

DEBT REDUCTION AND SAVINGS BILL

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (3.55 pm): I rise today to contribute to this debate on the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill. During my contribution, I will refer to some memory lapses from those opposite. I really like to listen to the member for Clayfield. He has been here a long time and he is interesting to listen to but he said something during his contribution about eight assistant ministers being a large number. I could be wrong but I believe the LNP government had 14 assistant ministers.

As we have heard already, the objectives of this bill are: to support Queensland's contribution to our Debt Retirement Fund; to introduce a fee unit model for annual indexing of government regulatory fees, making the process simpler and more transparent; to integrate the staff, assets, records, resources and liabilities of Building Queensland into the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning to pivot the focus of work from identifying and leading business cases for government agencies to assisting them in the progression of infrastructure policies; and to reintegrate the Public Service Business Agency into public safety entities. I know there are some constituents in Kurwongbah who will particularly welcome that transition.

The bill will also: integrate the activities of the Queensland Productivity Commission into Queensland Treasury and the Queensland Competition Authority; change the governance structure of the National Injury Insurance Agency Queensland—a no-fault scheme providing lifetime treatment, care and support to those who sustain eligible serious personal injuries in a motor vehicle accident in Queensland; and to make it easier for governments to meet their legislated print and advertising requirements, with recognition of society's growing preference for online mediums. In summary, this bill introduces changes to existing machinery of government arrangements that will increase efficiency to help pay down debt and save money because, unlike the federal LNP government—a government about to hit a trillion dollars in debt—Queensland is committed to paying down our debt in a fast and responsible way. We will do it without introducing new taxes and, more importantly, without cutting frontline services—two areas we know the LNP has form in.

We hear much in this place about asset sales from all sides. Those opposite constantly bleat about Labor's asset sales. Members opposite have said many times in this place that when they were in government they never sold assets. This is untrue. I am no fan of asset sales; it is well known I am no fan of asset sales from any government. I just want to put on the record again that the LNP Newman government did sell assets. We all know they did. They can say they did not until they are blue in the face, but facts are facts and the proof is right here. I table a document which highlights some of the \$10 billion of assets let go during the Newman years.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Australian Financial Review* online, dated 14 October 2014, titled 'Despite assurances, Queensland on asset selloff binge' [720](#).

This article from the *Financial Review* by Mark Ludlow itemises the \$10.7 billion that the Newman government let go. It starts with the line—

The Queensland government—

meaning the Newman LNP government—

has sold more than \$10 billion of assets since elected in 2012, despite claiming it would wait for a privatisation mandate at next year's election.

Some of the highlights of the larger sales are: \$824 million of property, including the executive buildings; \$7.1 billion from the sale of Queensland Motorways, which was privatised from QIC, sold to a private company from QIC; \$3.8 billion sell-down in rail operator Aurizon; and the stake in the South Australian electricity supplier ElectraNet to a Chinese company for \$500 million, and I remember being at Powerlink when we heard about that.

They even tried to sell the Kallangur State School oval but thankfully we stopped that. They then planned to sell off another \$30 billion if they won the 2015 election, and they spent upwards of \$70 million trying to tell us it was the right thing to do under their failed Strong Choices plan. Thank goodness they did not win. Now with Campbell Newman back in the leadership team of the party, the sky is the limit for them. Sit down, buckle up, put your helmet on and wait for the sale announcements.

We have heard much about how the cuts of the LNP were so brutal to Queenslanders. One that has slipped under the radar that I would like to highlight—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Walker): Pause the clock. Minister and the member for Gregory, through the chair or you can take it outside. I am trying to hear the speech.

Mr KING: Oh I would like to see that!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:—and talk civilly.

Mr KING: We have heard much about how the cuts of the LNP were so brutal. One that slipped under the radar that I would like to highlight was the cuts to the electricity network I worked in. We had a redundancy built into our network called N-1. Members would remember the rhetoric from those opposite about gold plating the network. This gold plating was N-1, or redundancy—or, to simplify it for those who are unaware, network security. Thank goodness the majority of the major electrical infrastructure that we rely on in this state was built under N-1 or outages like yesterday's generator fire and system trip could take days to restore. The quick restoration of our power grid was due to our publicly owned network and loyal workforce in the industry. If the LNP had gotten away with selling our electricity network we would literally still be in the dark.

We also know that the LNP's record when it comes to cutting frontline services bites hardest in some of our most vulnerable communities like in the federal electorate of Longman, which includes some of the suburbs I represent in this place. That is why I was so pleased to hear the announcement by the federal opposition leader, Anthony Albanese, a week ago that Caboolture local Rebecca Fanning will be Labor's candidate for Longman at the next election. She has credentials, and this is where this ties in because she worked for former Labor treasurer Wayne Swan.

Mr KRAUSE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. As interesting as it is to hear about Labor's candidate for that area, it has nothing to do with the bill. I ask you to bring the member back to the bill.

Mr KING: Thanks, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will return to the bill.

We all love Queensland. As a state, we have led our way through our recovery efforts in the face of the continuing COVID-19 global pandemic—and Rebecca Fanning loves Queensland, too, by the way—thanks to the remarkable personal efforts of all Queenslanders and thanks to the decisions made by our government. While other countries are shutting down, in Queensland we are gearing back up. We have managed to keep our credit rating strong while investing in infrastructure projects right across our state—projects that are creating jobs and projects that will leave a positive legacy for future generations. I have gone through many times the projects in Kurwongbah that we are delivering.

There is the Dakabin station accessibility upgrade, which is on track to be finished this year thanks to savings we have made. There is also the Petrie intersection upgrade. Works there are in full swing, so the long-time traffic bottleneck that is the roundabout will soon be a thing of the past. There is the Bruce Highway upgrade at Deception Bay Road and New Settlement Road, a project that our state government fought hard to deliver after the LNP government scrapped/pushed back—they took it out of QTRIP—its funding under Campbell Newman. There are also local sporting facilities upgrades including: new change rooms recently opened at the home of the mighty Pine Rivers Bears, Mathieson Park in Petrie; Works for Queensland upgrade at Narangba Rangers footy ground; tennis centre at Harris Avenue in Narangba, \$2 million; new lighting for the Burpengary Jets' home ground; and tens of

thousands of dollars in grants to help small businesses adapt their operations in the face of COVID-19, with another three new grants programs just announced this month. In addition, our government is delivering the \$400 million redevelopment of Caboolture Hospital, investing more to catch up on elective surgeries paused by COVID-19, and providing exciting new tourism initiatives to help the sector get back on its feet in our area.

These are the services that Queenslanders want. These are the services we need as we continue investing in the recovery from the impacts of COVID-19. Like any household or business must do when they encounter a change in financial circumstances, we have reviewed the state's balance sheet and made savings where we can. We have a target to achieve \$3 billion in savings over the next four years. This bill will put some of those savings—around \$3 million in direct savings per year—into place. I echo the words of the Treasurer when he introduced this bill: every dollar matters, and it does.

I am proud to be part of the Palaszczuk Labor government who puts our people first. We have taken tough decisions to keep Queenslanders safe. Thanks to our fantastic recovery, domestic activity and employment numbers have rebounded across Queensland. This is good news for our government and good news for Queenslanders.

We will continue to find savings to deliver on our commitments to Queenslanders. The savings in these machinery-of-government changes are an important part of our plan to get on with the task of creating jobs, investing in infrastructure and delivering frontline services without cutting, sacking and selling. I commend the bill to the House.