




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Record of Proceedings, 25 May 2021

DEBT REDUCTION AND SAVINGS BILL

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (3.31 pm): It is very obvious that the member for Hervey Bay has not been here long and has already drunk the Kool Aid and cannot wait to get home to the local meeting and sing *Solidarity Forever*, with Bob Hawke in the background.

Mr Saunders: We stand for something; unlike you.

Mr MANDER: I take the interjection. The member for Maryborough stands for bad dress. This is a Clayton's bill. This is the debt reduction bill you have when you are not having a debt reduction bill. This is a great con job that the Treasurer is trying to pull on the people of Queensland. He has conned his backbenchers. They all think this is actually going to make a difference. To think this has anything to do with debt reduction is the greatest con that has been brought into this parliament for some time. If those opposite believe that, those opposite will believe anything.

As has already been signalled, the appropriate name of the bill should be the 'Debt Non-Reduction and Minimal Savings Bill'. I think the name 'questionable savings bill' is even better. This is a joke of a bill. This is smoke and mirrors. This bill has absolutely no credibility. In fact, it has as much credibility as the Treasurer's economic recovery plan, that 60-page document that had a few words and a lot of pictures. Does a document with a lot of pictures and a few words sound familiar? We have recently heard about another one of those. It is entertaining reading. One page is dot points about what they are going to do going forward. The Treasurer's economic recovery plan is absolutely entertaining. It does not get any better than that.

This is a con job that the Treasurer is pulling on the people of Queensland which the backbenchers in the Labor Party have been sucked in by. This is from a Treasurer who had the hide to come in here and talk about broken promises. Who can forget the Bligh government, the government that had Minister Hinchliffe and Minister Dick around its table? They said there would be no asset sales. What happened a couple of weeks after the election? Asset sales! What happened to that money? It was washed down the drain and we went into further debt. There was absolutely no benefit to the economy whatsoever. The LNP decided to do something novel. We sought a mandate. We did not get it and we did not sell one single asset. It was the Bligh government that sold the assets of this state.

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): I am prepared to allow some latitude with the debate given the topic and subject matter, but when I can no longer hear the member on his feet I will ask you all to cease your interjections and I will start issuing warnings.

Mr MANDER: Thank you for your protection, Madam Deputy Speaker. The hypocrisy of this mob knows no end. They have the gall to come in here and lecture this side of the House about economic management and performance when they have absolutely zero plan. The Treasurer is telling the truth—and I could not believe it when he did it—when he told the House what motivated this bill, and that was to maintain the credit rating. Who was responsible for the last downgrade of the credit rating? Some of the blow-ins who have just come in will not be aware of that. It was the Bligh government.

Dr Rowan: Andrew Fraser!

Mr MANDER: I will take that interjection from the member for Moggill. It was the Bligh government with Andrew Fraser. It was under the former administration that our credit rating was downgraded. This Treasurer is panicking that the same will happen again. For the benefit of the backbenchers on the Labor side of the House, this is shuffling money from one side and putting it over to another side. It is smoke and mirrors. It will make not one ounce of difference to our debt reduction. In fact, it will probably be worse because the revenue we used to have on the profit and loss is not gone; it is on the balance sheet. It will make absolutely no difference whatsoever. This is from a government that supposedly has an economic plan.

We have the second worst unemployment rate. We vary between the worst and the second worst unemployment rate in the country. This government blames JobKeeper. Nobody else blames JobKeeper. In fact, everybody else's unemployment went down. This government has to blame someone. They blame Canberra. If it is not Canberra, it is COVID. If it is not COVID, it is Campbell. They have to blame somebody seven years afterwards, even when they have spent 25 out of the last 30 years in government. That is what is important and the people of Queensland know it and will not be conned by this.

This bill is ironic. It is about debt reduction and better economic management. We are getting rid of the Queensland Productivity Commission, one of the very good initiatives of the previous treasurer, Speaker Pitt, to make sure that we are efficient in relation to economic issues and the implementation of programs. This government is getting rid of it because they do not like bad news. They do not like it when the Productivity Commission comes back and says they are doing it wrong, wasting money or stuffing it up. They started referring less and less to the Productivity Commission because they do not want bad news.

It is the same situation when it comes to Building Queensland. It was the brainchild of another treasurer, Jackie Trad. It was a ship in the night that has passed. This government is getting rid of it because they do not like programs being analysed or proper business cases being implemented. In fact, now when we ask those basic questions everything is commercial-in-confidence. If the returns are that great for the state why is the public not allowed to know? If you let us know and we think it is a great idea, we will support it. How can we support it when we have no details? The Productivity Commission is another example. It will become part of the department. Do members think it will be independent? It is an absolute waste of time.

This is part of the con job. When it comes to the valuation of the titles office, again there is no detail whatsoever. If the layman sees what New South Wales and Victoria were valued at and that Queensland has a value of at least \$1½ billion, are they to believe that the activity in New South Wales and Victoria is less than Queensland? It defies logic and common sense. Whatever the backbenchers who have been here for a few moments are told in the party room to do they will do. They read the speech they are given that day without any idea about what they are reading. It is embarrassing.

The fact that there were no submissions from anybody in the economic sector—an issue that has already been brought up by a couple of speakers—is a very valid point. That is the contempt they had for this bill. They can see that this bill is exactly what we are saying it is: a con job. That is why we cannot support the bill. If we thought this bill would make one bit of difference to debt reduction then we would support it, but we cannot support a con job. This is a facade and we are not going to play along with it. We have to speak against this bill and we will vote against it because it is plainly wrong.

This government does not have an economic agenda. As has been mentioned already, this week there is only one bill before the House. Isn't it amazing that we now have unlimited time to debate a bill? There is no business motion before the House. When there were three or four bills on the *Notice Paper* they talked about how important that was, to make sure that we did everything efficiently, but now we can speak for as long as we like. Everyone opposite will speak because they have to drag out the debate for the whole week. Tomorrow some nonsense motion will be moved to indulge in a bit of Canberra bashing and that will waste 1½ or maybe two hours, depending on how the time is going. The address-in-reply will be dragged out for the rest of the year to fill in wherever it is needed. It is embarrassing. I had school kids in here today and they asked what was on the agenda this week. I said, 'We've got one bill that they will drag out for so long as they can because they have nothing else to do.'

The government has no economic agenda. The Treasurer has no economic credibility and this bill is evidence of that. Eventually this government will run out of cover. Eventually people will see them for what they are—that is, a government that works on false pretences. And the tsunami is coming: the Bligh tsunami is coming and I cannot wait for that day.