




Speech By
Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Liberal National Party

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (2.42 pm): If only there was a forum where the member for Toowoomba South could ask the Treasurer some questions. It sounds like he is pitching to get on tomorrow or Thursday's list, but there are only a couple of days left so we will see how he goes. Labor governments have always fought for and protected our Public Service and frontline workers—like during COVID where we backed our frontline workers or like when the LNP cut, sacked and sold our assets. We are on the side that always backs workers.

Even now the Crisafulli LNP opposition are attempting to erase history and tell Queenslanders that they have changed. Last week the Leader of the Opposition made a speech at the Queensland Media Club where he hoped he would put to bed growing concerns about what a Crisafulli government would mean for Queensland public servants. After the 'Right wing priorities for Queensland' document a month or so back, the Leader of the Opposition has tried to fill in a few gaps. That document barely mentioned the public sector, save for a few motherhood statements. We saw the Leader of the Opposition spruik in his address that old phrase that there will be no forced redundancies. He could have used the media opportunity to finally apologise to the 14,000 workers they sacked from the Public Service. Queenslanders have not forgotten the 14,000 redundancies and the families that were affected. Post COVID and during global cost-of-living pressures, imagine if another 14,000 workers were cut and the impact that that would have for families and individuals. We can never trust the Leader of the Opposition and the LNP who were the ones around the cabinet table who made these catastrophic decisions. We should never forget their track record. We need to learn from the past to prevent the same mistakes from happening again. We are seeing history repeating itself when Campbell Newman said in 2012—

So what is our commitment? We have said that there will be no forced redundancies in the general Public Service. That is what we have said: there will be no forced redundancies.

History showed otherwise, of course, and the 14,000 workers, their families and friends have never forgotten.

Jump to last week and the Leader of the Opposition has pledged no forced redundancies. Back in 2020 the member for Nanango promised no forced redundancies and then revealed a plan to cut \$750 million from the Public Service. Back in 2017 the member for Clayfield committed to—you guessed it—no forced redundancies and then unveiled a \$2 billion plan for cuts. This all started in 2012 with Campbell Newman promising no forced redundancies. When the member for Broadwater was in that cabinet he called it 'the cost cutting that had to take place'. Campbell Newman thought little of public servants when he said—

We get the pooper scooper out every day of the week. We have to make these tough decisions.

What a disgraceful thing to say. It is obvious that the seven-point plan of the member for Broadwater is just a smokescreen to cover up what they really want to do. This seven-point plan sets out clear goals and KPIs. We have heard it all before. This is coded language for cuts. The over 250,000 Queensland public servants across this state will not buy into this false promise. We saw in the paper today the Leader of the Opposition is promising more health workers, but is refusing to back it up with even a headline figure. One does not have to scratch the surface too deeply to see it is the same old rusted Newman government underneath the fresh coat of paint. Just like his shameful backflip on treaty, his promises are not worth the paper they are written on.

Mr Power: He says one thing and then he does the opposite.

Mr MELLISH: I will take that interjection from the member for Logan. There was another detail I did notice in his Media Club speech. He tried to give himself a bit of gravitas, he tried to give himself some intellectual depth by calling for the reinstatement of the Queensland Productivity Commission. He has been out there saying they would listen to a Queensland productivity commission and take their recommendations very seriously. What is his track record? What does the leader actually think about productivity commissions? One would assume he wants to bring back the Queensland Productivity Commission and that he would respect the work that they would do. In 2014 when he was a Newman government minister he said in a written response to a draft Productivity Commission report—

The Queensland Government is disappointed with the content of the Draft Report, which is lacking in evidence-based recommendations ...

He also said in this chamber in 2014 that some of the recommendations should be 'kicked so far into touch that we never hear about them again'. That is what he thinks of productivity commissions. He did not respect their work when he was a minister but now he wants to bring one back in Queensland despite not valuing the work when he was a minister. What would be the point if the Leader of the Opposition abuses them if they disagree with them? Again, do not trust what this Leader of the Opposition says, look at what he does. The reality is there is no way he can balance the books of the easy ride he is gearing up to give on royalties without making deep cuts in the public sector. Maybe they do not even want to balance the books. After all, no LNP at a state level or a federal level since the LNP have formed has ever delivered a budget surplus. That is over a dozen budgets at a state and federal level with zero budget surpluses. They are poor on the economy, they are poor on the public sector and all we need to do is look at their track record.