




Speech By
Stephen Andrew

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2024

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Economy

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—Ind) (2.49 pm): Over the past four years, as a Queensland state member of parliament I have done what I could to advance the principles of individual liberty and personal responsibility, which were the values of the Australia I grew up in. From the time I was elected to represent the wonderful people of the Mirani electorate, often I have taken a different view of things in this House. It is a view that nothing we face as a country, no matter how urgent or dire it seems, should require us to scrap all of our nation's hard-won rights and freedoms. Governments should never be in the business of closing down small businesses, churches or our hospital and health services. To my way of thinking, doing any of those things is unnecessary and I believe that the facts have since borne that out. Questioning and challenging public policy is the role and responsibility of us all as elected representatives. I believe it is the most important role.

For decades, rural Queenslanders have been burdened by government interference in their lives. I have always sought to champion important issues for those people who feel increasingly ignored by governments, bureaucrats and even their elected representatives. Australian businesses are operating in an increasingly tough global marketplace, burdened with government generated costs and bureaucratic red tape, which is destroying their competitiveness and livelihoods. As a result, the number of business insolvencies is now sky-high. I know one farmer whose rates have gone from \$13,000 to nearly \$50,000 in the past two years. Forty-eight per cent of horticultural businesses are facing going broke as they have made no profits for the past four years.

Australian businesses are operating in an increasingly tough environment. In the regions we are seeing closures everywhere. The cost of electricity is killing businesses. I know of one bloke in my electorate who was paying \$1.50 per tonne to water his cane and is now paying between \$7 and \$10 per tonne. That is cruel. The true problems are masked by a strong coalmining sector but it too is now under a sustained attack. How long it will be able to continue propping us up is a matter for debate.

I know that people are getting angry, particularly in the regions, due to the proliferation of gigantic wind factories, solar farms and transmission lines or the tyre-wrecking potholed roads and overcrowded towns and cities. The Queensland economy is in trouble. Productive activity is drowning under the burden of bloated government and stifling bureaucracy for which climate change has become a handy catch-all excuse for every repetitious and onerous measure that they seek to impose.

The era of government cost shifting onto business is going to come to an end. Government has been saying, 'We'll just shift the cost onto business and they will pay.' However, businesses cannot pay any more. They are going under or are completely closing down. I do not think many people realise that. The transition will end up costing us our freedom, our food, our energy, our health and our way of life. That is what happens when, for over a decade, you refuse to invest in new generating capacity. Unless there is a radical change in direction we are all heading for much less—

(Time expired)