




Speech By
Hermann Vorster

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

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QUEENSLAND PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION BILL

 **Mr VORSTER** (Burleigh—LNP) (8.42 pm): I am very proud indeed to support the Queensland Productivity Commission Bill. I do so recognising what productivity is about. Productivity is not a big, long word plucked from a textbook. Productivity is the means by which we may generate wealth for the state of Queensland. It is not wealth for its own sake but wealth to fuel an economy that lifts living standards and fulfils the aspirations of a great people.

Presently, the best I can surmise is that the LNP has inherited a very weak and anaemic economy. Dare I say, it is a sick economy. That is because we have just learned during this sitting that Standard & Poor's have put us on notice. Because Queensland's productivity is falling, our economy is not growing fast enough to deal with the terrible debt legacy left by those opposite which is projected to be—and I stand to be corrected—\$40,000 for every man, woman and child in the state of Queensland.

I am motivated to support this bill because of a conversation I had while on the hustings. I was doorknocking the beautiful southern parts of Palm Beach. I recall this conversation very clearly. I approached the front door of this duplex. It was a hot day. I had been doorknocking for hours. I could not quite get to the front door because of a gate across the driveway. I did not need to make it to the front door because a lady—I will not name her—was doing the gardening in the driveway. She took a lot of pride in her garden. She explained to me that she loved Palm Beach. She loved living there. She loved the simple things in life, including gardening in her old age. We had a great conversation. I moved on. I kept on doorknocking and a few weeks later I returned to the same neighbourhood.

This time I was doing a roadside and the same lady came up to me. She said, 'Hermann, you're everywhere.' I said, 'Thank you very much. But so are you, ma'am. You are absolutely everywhere. Since I met you the first time, I see you constantly out of the house.' She said, 'I love walking my dog. I love the outdoors.' I said, 'What's going on in your life?' She explained to me that she was in the process of investigating getting a visa to Vietnam. This struck me as very odd. I could not help myself. I threw my hands up in the sky—it was a beautiful day—and I said, 'But why would you want to leave Palm Beach? This suburb is paradise.' She explained to me that as a pensioner she could no longer afford to put a roof over her head. What I thought was her home when I doorknocked her the first time turned out to be the home of her friend. She was not living in a habitable part of that home; she was living in the only safe place she could. The thing is, it was not all that safe for her and she had to spend as much time as she could out of that home. She shed a few tears on the roadside. I will never forget these words. She said, 'Hermann, I have worked my whole life. I have paid my taxes, but in my moment of need there is no help. There is no longer a place for me in my own country.'

Those words shook me. They also lit a fire in me to do something about it, because in this great nation and in this great state we have the ability to compete with any other in the Commonwealth. With the mineral wealth, the intellect, the aspiration and the enterprise of this state, there is every opportunity for us to create the wealth necessary.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kempton): Member for McConnel.

Mr VORSTER: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. Those opposite have long forgotten the battler. They are too busy making ridiculous metaphors about their propensity to throw money away than to look after decent Queenslanders in their time of need. This Productivity Commission will be the pathway to that wealth creation. It will be the pathway to reducing the costs that have pushed Queensland families to the breaking point. I am most excited by the direction provided by our fine Treasurer. He is much better than the other lot could ever produce. He said that the first order of business for the Productivity Commission will be to look into the housing and construction sector.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Burleigh, take a seat. Members who are choosing to squabble across the House, I will start naming you if you persist.

Mr VORSTER: By addressing housing, not only will we have the ability to look after the forgotten battlers—the battlers that those opposite forgot—but we will be able to unlock aspiration in the next generation, giving them a stake in their communities, because private property and home ownership is the foundation of a stable and healthy society. It encourages personal responsibility, it gives people a powerful incentive for good stewardship and it also creates that private space where families can instil values and traditions which will lead to a stable and strong society. Those homes will never be built if they are too expensive to be built. Low productivity is robbing those young people of the opportunity to buy their stake into the Australian dream.

During this debate I have heard very unusual arguments from those opposite that this bill is not worth supporting because it is not—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for McConnel, you are warned. Member for Bundaberg, you are warned.

Mr VORSTER: They are not listening to me, in the same way they have not been listening to Queenslanders. If they had been listening, they would be sitting on the government benches; instead they are sitting on the opposition benches.

Getting the housing question sorted is very important to this government. Today we have already abolished Labor's disgraceful tax on housing for first home buyers. We have done that but there is more to do. This bill will put forward options for the government to act on to reduce the cost of housing and to ease the cost-of-living pressures borne by Queenslanders so there is more money in their pocket which can be pumped back into the economy for productive purposes. As I said, it will give more Queenslanders a stake in their state.

We have heard inane arguments from those opposite that this bill is not worth supporting because the Productivity Commission is not independent. That is not seeing the forest for the trees. At least we will restore a productivity commission. If there is to be someone directing that Productivity Commission and putting it to work, I would sooner have it be our Treasurer than any other member opposite. Those opposite do not believe in productivity; they believe in a weak economy where battlers have to depend on them. We believe in aspiration, where people can stand up under the strength of their own hard work.