




Speech By
James Martin

MEMBER FOR STRETTON

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QUEENSLAND PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION BILL

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (4.31 pm): It is an interesting experience to follow the member for Chatsworth. I remind the House that the member for Chatsworth was the LNP's shadow transport minister. It was great to listen to him explain during his turgid lecture what productivity means and how to save money, but he was the one who called 50-cent public transport fares a con. I note for the benefit of the House that he has done an almighty backflip and apparently now 50-cent public transport fares were their idea. When it comes to productivity in the LNP, it is all about politics and not productivity—exactly like this bill.

I rise to speak on the Queensland Productivity Commission Bill, which establishes the Queensland Productivity Commission as a statutory body to conduct inquiries, reviews and research into economic, social and regulatory matters. Its stated aim is to improve productivity and economic performance in Queensland, but this is not the independent body that the LNP promised Queenslanders. It is more like an LNP think tank designed to serve the agenda of the LNP, not the people of Queensland.

The LNP claim that this bill mirrors the Australian Productivity Commission, yet that body can commence its own research without Treasurer approval. Under this legislation, the Queensland Productivity Commission's proposed research for publication must be approved by the Treasurer, who can refuse or amend the proposals without limit and block publication. This commission answers only to the Treasurer, not Queenslanders. The LNP do not want independence; they just want a body that echoes their priorities, providing excuses to cut jobs and workers' conditions.

The government's opposition to transparency is clear. They failed to release cabinet documents within the 30-day review timeframe. When they were pressed on this by the media, they ignored the questions. The Treasurer cites the independent economic modelling from Treasury to pause BPIC yet refuses to release it, despite a right-to-information request. If Treasury can already conduct such modelling, why create a commission with the same function and no greater independence? It still cannot commence public research without the Treasurer's approval. It is not more accountability; it is a move away from accountability.

The LNP's history fuels these concerns. We obviously remember that under Campbell Newman 40,000 Queenslanders lost their jobs under the guise of efficiency. Queenslanders fear that this bill is another tool for cuts. The LNP's productivity prioritises profits over people, not better wages or services, and when the Treasurer talks productivity he wastes parliament's time duplicating Treasury's role with less transparency.

Contrast this with Labor's record. We eased cost-of-living pressures on Queenslanders with our 50-cent public transport fares—something that the LNP's former shadow transport minister called a con. We halved Airtrain fares to support those working at the airport. As I said before, the LNP have now claimed credit for our 50-cent public transport fares initiative, despite neglecting commuters historically. We cannot forget that in 1988 the Borbidge LNP government locked Queensland into the

unfair Airtrain deal, creating a private monopoly until 2036. As we know, Airtrain fares doubled under the current LNP government, with the current transport minister refusing to extend the 50 per cent discount that Labor had put in.

In health care, the LNP's priorities raise concerns amongst the community that Queenslanders' health could suffer due to the drive for efficiency. The health minister cancelled a contract for an eight-bed perinatal mental health unit in Townsville which was part of Labor's \$1.6 billion mental health plan. This vital service for expectant mothers—one in five of whom face depression or anxiety within 24 months of childbirth—is now delayed, with no clear timeframe. This is creating anxiety in the community.

Privacy concerns also loom. The bill requires agencies to provide personal information to the commission without consent. The Law Society warns that the broad definition of 'related information' risks privacy breaches. The government must allow entities to refuse such requests when they unnecessarily infringe on privacy.

This bill is more about control than productivity. Queenslanders have seen the LNP's playbook. Productivity can be used to justify job cuts and sell-offs. Efficiency without independence from the LNP political party means that more working people pay the price.

What we need is genuine productivity—lifting wages, strengthening services and supporting growth—not an LNP think tank or more austerity. That is why I strongly support the shadow treasurer's foreshadowed amendments to this bill. The LNP promised an independent productivity commission, but this legislation delivers the opposite. The amendments remove the Treasurer's ability to interfere with the commission's self-initiated research, allowing it to commence and publish findings without approval. This is what independence demands. A government as opposed to transparency as the LNP will never allow truly independent findings to surface. The amendments also ensure that if the Treasurer issues written directions to the commission Queenslanders will know exactly what he has instructed before research begins. Transparency and accountability must prevail. Without these changes, the commission remains a puppet of the Treasurer, not a servant of the people. The LNP must honour its election promise.