



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**


**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Minister for Home Ownership**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (2.47 pm): What a month for the—hang on, I just have to check my political strife scale here—oh, the embattled Treasurer. April Fools' is usually just a day, but for him it has fast become April Fools' month—an explosion, a cover-up, a budget blowout and a man in hiding. Now Queenslanders are asking themselves, 'How can we trust this bloke to deliver the budget for this state when he cannot even manage his own portfolio? How can we trust the Premier when the Treasurer still has his job and still has to hand down the budget?'

I am sure just before the start of April, the Treasurer was really looking forward to the month ahead. It was his chance to show the Premier that he finally could do it, after being hidden through the election campaign and choosing to go on holiday rather than delivering MYFER last year—this was his big chance. He had his keynote speech scheduled in front of the entire energy sector, but just like that, it all went up in smoke. Callide exploded the Friday before and, instead of being open and accountable, just like the Premier said his ministers would be, he absolutely failed to mention it in his speech. He was caught juicing the figures on CopperString, so much so that Powerlink, the government owned corporation responsible for delivering the project, had to correct what he said. He did not even tell the Premier until the morning after the media got the drop.

So embarrassed—as you would be—he tried to hide. While the health minister fronted the cameras previewing his plan to delay thousands of hospital beds beyond 2028, the Treasurer's office was telling journalists, 'No, he will not be standing up today'—until he was dragged out of 1 William Street at 4.30 in the afternoon. It was not a good idea, after all, because his performance was so bad he was sent back into witness protection. He was not even allowed to stand up for his hospital in Toowoomba, the project just down the road from his electorate office. It was myself and the member for Woodridge who had to go up to Toowoomba and say to the community, 'We do not stand for these cuts to your hospital.' He would not even come out of his electorate office and answer questions. It was only when CS Energy was forced to take the blame that he decided to stand up—20 days after the explosion and after his creative accounting when it came to the cost of CopperString.

How can Queenslanders trust this man? He has refused to answer when his office received photos of the explosion, refused to answer when he told the Premier. He stuffed up on cooking the books to avoid building CopperString. As they say, it is never the crime, it is always the cover-up that gets you. There was a meeting with CS Energy before they took the blame. Who was in the meeting? What was the advice that was given? Did the board endorse the statement where they took the blame in an official board meeting? I have no doubt that the Treasurer will use every shortcut and staircase to avoid the gallery this week but if the Premier had an ounce of decency—any belief in his own mantra about openness and transparency—then he would tell the Treasurer to address the media, or at least this chamber, otherwise the only option is to move the political strife scale from 'embattled Treasurer' to 'former', although maybe that is something some of those opposite might want to see.

The member for Mudgeeraba is licking her lips at the prospect of taking the Treasurer's job. She is currently the minister for stationery and petty change. Nobody has asked the member for Mudgeeraba what she knew about the explosion. She is the other shareholding minister, although you would never know it. Nobody has asked her because nobody expects her to do anything. Let's be honest. Nobody has even asked the member for Mudgeeraba about what she has done about US trade negotiations or tariffs because nobody expects her to achieve anything. The Premier has been out there saying the member for Mudgeeraba has been doing a great job working with industry on these tariffs. What has she been doing? What have we heard? There has not been anything coming from the member for Mudgeeraba, the Minister for Finance. She is too busy licking her lips trying to take over from the Treasurer when he becomes 'former'. It shows that after a failing and flailing Treasurer, the whole LNP government is full of uninspiring and accident-prone MPs.