



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

Federation Chamber

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Queensland: Employment

SPEECH

Wednesday, 21 June 2017

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

<p>Date Wednesday, 21 June 2017</p> <p>Page 140</p> <p>Questioner</p> <p>Speaker O'Brien, Ted, MP</p>	<p>Source House</p> <p>Proof Yes</p> <p>Responder</p> <p>Question No.</p>
---	---

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (13:04): For the five minutes that I listened to the member for Herbert speak, she only gave less than 30 seconds to talk about the topic—which is, of course, the Queensland Labor government. There is one thing worse than being spoken of in politics when you are leading—that is, in fact, when no-one says anything about you at all. If you have members of the Labor Party in such denial that they do not even want to speak about their government other than having some fake rubbery numbers of comparison, it says it all. The member for Herbert tried to base her entire argument on this myth that the Turnbull federal government has not funded anything north of Brisbane. 'Nothing north of Brisbane' is her claim, and yet we heard just previously from the member for Fisher that \$1.6 billion is being spent on the Bruce Highway alone. We have \$929 million, the sod turned and already under construction, on the section between the Caloundra Road turn-off and the Sunshine Motorway. We have \$187 million around the Maroochydore interchange—80 per cent funded by the federal coalition government—and a \$181 million concessional loan to the Sunshine Coast Airport. These are big licks of money for major infrastructure, despite what the member for Herbert suggested—yes, north of Brisbane and, yes, by the coalition.

The member for Oxley, of course, after his very longwinded whine about all things wrong, to his credit, conceded that unemployment is too high in Queensland. But his only answer was more jobs for public servants—15,000 jobs created already over two years, and big-government Labor's only solution to unemployment in Queensland is—guess what?—more public servants. Where are these public servants going? You bet, right into metropolitan capital city Brisbane. It is typical of the Labor Party because they have to look after their union mates where some of their people are under threat of losing their seats. They are coming under attack from the Greens. That is why you see in this last budget nothing to do with regional and rural Queensland and creating jobs, but looking after two jobs—that is, of the Deputy Premier, Jackie Trad, and of Grace Grace. All of this is a robust budget for the jobs of those in the Labor Party.

Queensland ought to be the powerhouse of job creation. We should be, but if you look at the latest data, only South Australia had a higher unemployment rate, of 7.1 per cent to Queensland's 6.3 per cent. A decade ago that would have been absolutely unthinkable—impossible—but today that is the case. Last month, even Tasmania, at 5.9 per cent, was performing better than Queensland and we were considerably worse than the national average of 5.7 per cent. The stats show that in May 2016 unemployment was 6.4 per cent. Go back another year, May 2015, unemployment was 6.4 per cent. Today, we have 6.3 per cent—in other words, nothing has happened under the Labor government. The state has lost over 38,000 jobs in the year to February alone, more than any other state, and yet the Labor Party suggests that this Queensland Labor government is about jobs. It is one of the oldest tricks in the book. They announce a budget and they call it a 'jobs' budget, because 'if we package it up and give it a title of jobs, people might actually believe that we are helping to create jobs.' Well, they are not.'

If we look to where the future is going, the Palaszczuk government is approaching \$80 billion in debt. They might claim to be paying some of that off but all they are doing is shuffling it around. They are throwing it into state owned enterprises, especially in the power sector. Who loses as a result of this? The huge dividends they are ripping out of that sector are resulting in higher electricity prices for everyday Queenslanders, the very Queenslanders who, due to this Labor state government, do not have jobs. So they do not give them jobs, do not give them investment and do not give them infrastructure but rip out the dividends that increase electricity prices. That is the Queensland state Labor government.