Speech By

Jon Krause

MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT

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MOTION OF CONFIDENCE

Mr KRAUSE (Beaudesert—LNP) (2.24 am): Mr Speaker, I congratulate you on your election as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland. It is an honour to hold the office. As one who has previously served this parliament on the Panel of Temporary Speakers, I understand the importance of the role the Speaker plays in this chamber of debate and examination.

The election of 31 January 2015 produced a hung parliament. No party has a majority. But the LNP team has no confidence in the Labor government, and I have no confidence in the Labor government and will be voting against this motion.

I thank the over one million Queenslanders who voted for the LNP for their support—over 100,000 more than voted for Labor. I especially thank the people of the Beaudesert electorate for electing me as their representative for a second time. I was re-elected to support an LNP government that improved services locally and across Queensland, such as restored services at the Beaudesert Hospital and the expanded government services in Boonah, Beaudesert, Jimboomba and Tamborine Mountain; invested in infrastructure such as the Beaudesert town bypass; kept government finances under control; kept taxes and the cost of living down; and enabled businesses to have the confidence to invest, employ and grow jobs for the future.

I have no confidence in government by a party that has a firm track record of neglecting the communities of the Beaudesert electorate. For years Beaudesert fought to have its hospital properly resourced and funded by recurrent funding to provide maternity and other services. The LNP delivered for Beaudesert, particularly the Leader of the Opposition.

Services and investment in the Fassifern area were cut by Labor in the Goss years, the Beattie years and the Bligh years, and the LNP invested in better services and community facilities, in our local hospitals and schools to improve the services on offer, such as the Queensland government customer service centre in Boonah.

The LNP delivered precious additional police resources across Queensland and across the growing Beaudesert electorate after years of neglect by a Labor Party that simply did not allocate sufficient resources for our community. Keeping our community safe is a primary role of government, and Labor's track record in government and recent equivocation in relation to criminal motorcycle gang laws represent a serious dereliction of that duty. These laws are working to keep our communities safe, are being replicated across the nation and should not be repealed. They should be retained. I cannot support a government that seeks to wind back measures like this. You only have to look at election results across the region most impacted by bikies, my neighbours on the Gold Coast, to see that those communities most impacted by criminal motorcycle gangs support the LNP's stance. Gold Coasters have seen how these laws work and how they have cleaned up the coast, and the LNP retained every seat on the coast.

I represent a region that sees thousands of recreational motorcyclists pass through it on a weekly basis. The LNP's laws have not resulted in harassed motorcyclists being constantly pulled over by police. Businesses have not seen trade drop in Canungra or Boonah or any of the other

places in the Scenic Rim along the trails. On the contrary, the numbers grow because recreational motorcyclists can now ride without fear of intimidation or harassment by criminals—a terrific outcome for them and for the whole of Queensland.

Only 37 per cent of Queenslanders voted for Labor. In my electorate, only 29 per cent voted for Labor. This government has no clear mandate, but I recognise the fact that it holds more seats than the LNP and is forming government because of the Premier's first broken promise, where she entered into a deal with the member for Nicklin after emphatically promising no deals with minor parties or Independents.

History tells us that Labor will spend more than it earns and put the balance on the credit card. It did it last time. It spent the last three years in denial about the impact that debt and the resultant interest costs have on the cost of living for Queenslanders, not to mention the ability of the state to invest in new infrastructure, and now it is shaping up to pick up where it left off. The LNP has brought spending under control through disciplined, prudent management of public finances. Disciplined spending and prudence are two things you can never associate with the Labor Party or any Labor government. The last time Labor ran a surplus at the Commonwealth level was in 1989, I believe. Even in 2008, after the coalition left a surplus of $20 billion, Kevin Rudd and Labor did not run a surplus. Debt and deficit are in Labor's DNA. It lost our AAA credit rating, costing Queenslanders millions of dollars more each year as a result. It has a 'debt reduction plan' that involves spending the proceeds of government owned corporations on debt repayment as well as on government services.

We have heard the Treasurer state many times that state debt is only around $46 billion because the debt of GOCs should not count. That is simply not true. The ratings agencies count the debt of GOCs and, until Labor's $80 billion debt is reduced, they will not give us back our AAA credit rating. I ask the Treasurer: if debt of GOCs should not count, why should the revenue from those same GOCs be counted as revenue to reduce debt or fund services? Once again Labor wants to have it both ways: to have its cake and eat it too—just the way it has always been—and the people of Queensland will pick up the bill. People in my electorate want business to grow and for government to keep a lid on spending and taxes so both consumers and businesses have the confidence to invest and spend. We need to invest in skilling Queenslanders—skilling our workforce—particularly for younger Queenslanders. But, more importantly, we need to have businesses that will employ people with skills and businesses that have the confidence to not just take on trainees or apprentices with a government incentive but confidence to keep them on in the long term.

The LNP has runs on the board for delivering cost savings to Queensland's households and businesses, not increasing the cost burden like Labor did in its last term of government. Tonight other members have spoken about the cost savings for households and for businesses that the LNP implemented in its last term of government such as the stamp duty concession introduced by our government where home owners will save up to $7,000 for their principal place of residence concession. Our federal colleagues removed the carbon tax on Queensland electricity tariffs, saving average households about $170 per year. I know many small businesses in my electorate, primary producers and otherwise, that are saving a lot more due to the actions of our federal government in removing the carbon tax. The LNP helped families with the cost of supporting the sick when it doubled the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme for accommodation and travel, and we were working on reducing the cost of water for South-East Queensland residents through implementing the $80 one-off rebate and by also implementing cost savings across the state owned water bodies which are expected to see reductions in water prices across South-East Queensland in the next financial year beginning on 1 July this year.

But who can forget the mess that Labor presided over in the electricity sector—from Beattie's privatisation of the retail arm of electricity to the massive gold-plating projects undertaken by Energex, Ergon and Powerlink over the past five years, all signed off and approved by the Labor Treasurer of the previous Labor government, Andrew Fraser, who I believe asked for Ergon, Energex and Powerlink to be able to charge more for electricity so they could pay more back to the government? The damage inflicted on our state's economy by the economic incompetence of Labor is still felt, none more so than by the primary producers of our state including many in my electorate who struggle under increasing irrigation electricity costs. The LNP retained specific irrigation tariffs, but the damage caused by Labor through its complete mismanagement of electricity is impossible to overstate. Remember, the Premier sat in the Labor caucus when all of this occurred. The Minister for Education sat in the Labor caucus when all of this occurred, and there could be a few others who sat in there too. They bear responsibility for it all and a responsibility to fix it now. As I said, our LNP colleagues in the federal government have removed the carbon tax, bringing some relief, but more needs to be done.

I do not have confidence that the Labor government has a plan to reduce debt, to grow business confidence or to deal with electricity and other cost-of-living issues. Two key initiatives that were presented by Labor during the campaign to enable it to claim it would reduce debt by $5.4 billion over six years and $12 billion over 10 years are unravelling. In recent days we have seen the ACCC attacking the Labor Party's plan to merge our power producers. It claimed it would save $150 million by merging those producers, but the ACCC has said that it would actually put up the price of power because of reduced competition. Therefore, we have seen that idea being recoiled from pretty quickly.

The other initiative relates to payroll tax and cancelling plans to lift the threshold for payroll tax where it is implemented. Payroll tax is a tax on jobs and I know that there are a number of small businesses—I will call them large small businesses—in my electorate who pay payroll tax and they know that it is a tax on jobs. Businesses across the state need to have tax relief from payroll tax, not just where they are taking on trainees but in general because they pay enough tax. This policy of the Labor Party has come under direct criticism from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and others. They estimate that 20,000 businesses will be impacted and 4,000 jobs lost as a result. The way to create jobs is to enable businesses to grow jobs—sustainable jobs—through economic activity, not through direct government intervention and subsidies into those sectors. We need to reduce the tax burden on businesses and reducing payroll tax, as the LNP had proposed to do by lifting the thresholds over a number of years, is a great step forward. We do have the highest payroll tax threshold in Australia, but that does not mean that we should not aim to make it even better for businesses in this state.

Today the ALP is a party that is completely dominated by the trade union movement. In 2008 the LNP was created by members. When all of us here seek preselection, we are selected by members of our branches who sign up to our party, support our party and hand out cards on election day. They volunteer their time and their effort and, in some cases, their blood and their sweat in order to further what they believe in. There have been proposals for reform in the Labor Party so that grassroots members are given more of a say in preselections and in other matters. In fact, there have been proposals where perhaps 50 per cent of the say could be given to grassroots branch members about preselections which were rejected by the Labor Party and today rank-and-file members get just one vote in three in the Labor Party. Union bosses count for two votes in every three at a time when trade union membership in Queensland and across Australia is dwindling and—

Mr Costigan: Heading south!

Mr KRAUSE: It is heading south; that is right, member for Whitsunday. At a time when trade union membership is dwindling and represents the lowest proportion of workers at just about any time in history, two in three votes in the Labor Party are represented by the union movement.

Government members interjected.

Mr KRAUSE: There has been a complete failure by the Leader of the Labor Party to reform that party, and I note that I have generated some interest from the benches opposite. It is fantastic to see that they are all still awake. Today we have the spectre of the factions dealing with not only who is preselected in the Labor Party but also who becomes ministers in the Queensland government. That is not the type of Queensland that we should be living in and certainly not the type of government that Queensland should have at this point in time.

My electorate does not want this Labor government. Labor has no plan for businesses to grow jobs, to keep the state's finances in balance or to improve the bottom line for Queenslanders by keeping taxes lower and reducing government spending and waste. That is just not in Labor's DNA. I will be voting against this motion to express the lack of confidence in Labor of the Beaudesert electorate.

In summing up I must point out that there have been a number of debacles of the Labor government in terms of health and other issues over the years. The issue that crystallises in my mind the neglect of the Labor Party of my electorate is a comment that was attributed to my Labor opponent during the campaign. She was asked a very simple question as to whether the Labor Party would commit to retaining restored services at the Beaudesert Hospital if it came to office. Her response more or less was, 'Well, who knows what tomorrow will bring.' I think that that is very reflective of the attitude that the government of today has towards the whole of the Beaudesert electorate and also the state—that is, who knows what tomorrow will bring. It has no clear plan and I have no confidence in this government.