

New Ambulance for Yarrabah Station

I was fortunate to catch up with local paramedics Claine Underwood, Richard Murgha, Lavin Keyes and Zak Pitra, as well as Warren Martin from Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), to hand over the keys to the new Mercedes Sprinter 319 to paramedics at the Yarrabah Ambulance Station.

The new ambulance comes fully equipped with state of the art technology and equipment our paramedics need to provide care to sick and injured people living in Yarrabah, Back Beach and surrounding areas.

The ambulance will provide a fast, efficient, modern service to

provide emergency pre-hospital care to deal with medical emergencies in the community.

Patients who need an ambulance in an emergency can be assured they have the latest lifesaving equipment on board and if transport to Cairns Hospital is required it's usually a very smooth ride in the back of a new Mercedes ambulance.

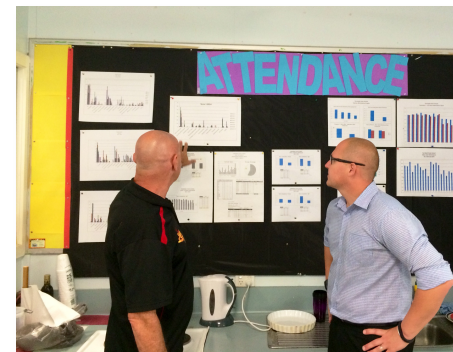
The dedication and professionalism of QAS staff is a vital element in the equation. I would like to acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of all the staff at Yarrabah Ambulance Station who contribute to the smooth operation of this service.



Curtis Pitt hands over the keys to paramedic Claine Underwood with Richard Murgha, Lavin Keyes, Warren Martin and Zak Pitra watching on.

Stamping out truancy

Education is everyone's business and this initiative deserves the support of all members of the Yarrabah community. We have to continue to instill in our young people the value of education, not only for their own personal enrichment but to ensure Yarrabah's future is a bright one.



Seahawks Juniors flying

The Seahawks seniors did us proud in the CDRL this year but I want to congratulate Ross Andrews and the entire Yarrabah Juniors committee. Great to see them back on the paddock. It's a real boost for our young people.



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Important Facts Inside



Home ownership a reality

Congratulations to Ailsa Lively on securing ownership of her house via a 99 year lease, the option being introduced by the previous Labor Government. Ninety-nine year leases not only provide security for the home owner, but also protect existing rights, such as Native Title and community rights over the land. The announcement by Yarrabah Shire Council and their support of 99 year leases shows that this option is a viable approach to increase home ownership in Yarrabah.

Labor supported the recent Freehold legislation because it isn't mandatory, but we did raise a number of community concerns, including the importance of trustees informing residents about the benefits or otherwise of this legislation before going down the freehold path.

I also used the opportunity to remind the House that both sides of politics support indigenous home ownership and this Bill came on the back of years of policy development

and programmatic work by previous governments. This work was the essential foundation that will enable any increased opportunity for home ownership under the former government or the current government.

Local projects underway



Great to see works finally progressing on the Women's Shelter and Indigenous Knowledge Centre (IKC). The previous Labor Government provided \$1.9 million for Council to fund the IKC and originally it was meant to be open last year. \$800,000 in State Government funding was committed for the two-storey shelter for Yarrabah women and children escaping family and domestic violence. It was originally due to open in late 2012. Both projects are expected to be completed in by mid 2015.



Ailsa Lively has become the first home owner under the Queensland Government's Indigenous Home Ownership program (Source: News Limited)

POWER PRICES UNDER NEWMAN

Last financial year Queensland recorded the largest single rise in power prices on record of more than 22%.

Soaring power bills hurt all of us, but hit those on low and fixed incomes hardest of all. So far under the Newman Government, the average Queensland family is paying an additional \$440 a year for its electricity – and that's with the repeal of the price on carbon.

This is despite Mr Newman's pledge before the last election that he had a plan to reduce power costs by \$120 a year.

Labor will establish an independent Queensland Productivity Commission and make electricity pricing its first task for investigation. The commission will provide independent advice.

Poles and wires Privatisation

The Newman Government's announcement that they will engage in the single largest asset sale in Queensland's history (still pretending a long-term lease is not an asset sale) is very concerning for regional communities like ours.

The LNP has now confirmed they are selling our electricity assets – the poles, the wires, the lot. It is another broken promise from Campbell Newman who promised this would never happen.



"A 99 year lease is as good as giving away the farm" and to say otherwise is "an attempt to perpetuate a con on the people of Queensland."

– Treasurer Tim Nicholls, 2010.

When monopoly infrastructure is privatised, we lose control over decision-making, we lose jobs and

we all lose because we'll pay even higher prices. It will also impact on our rural producers and businesses who have already been hit hard by rising electricity prices.

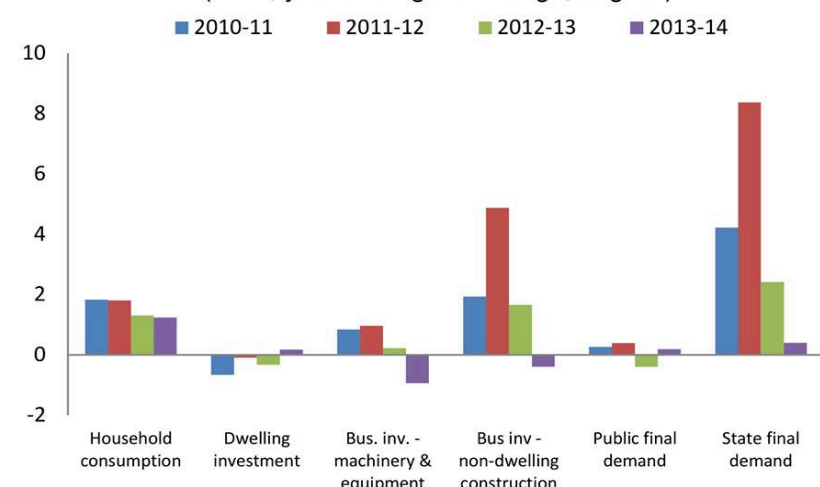
Queenslanders have made it clear that they don't want their income-producing assets sold, especially when those it has a direct impact on their household budget. For FNQ it's a double hit. The subsidy for regional power this financial year will total \$683 million – paid for by the returns from the government-owned electricity network (around \$1.5 billion each year). What big new tax will the Newman Government introduce to make up this \$1.5 billion annual shortfall in revenue? And just like in South Australia, the Treasurer has recently admitted Queensland taxpayers won't own 'leased electricity infrastructure unless they buy it back at a cost of billions of dollars.

Privatisation is a tax on future generations – on our kids and their kids – and we'll all be paying higher prices to private companies. Labor has listened to Queenslanders and will stand up and protect our electricity assets.



FACT: If Queensland's largest ever asset sales program goes ahead, we will lose more than \$60 billion in income to the State over the next 30 years.

Chart 1: Contribution to SFD, Queensland
(CVM, year-average % change, original)



State Final Demand is a key measure of the Queensland economy (SOURCE: ABS)

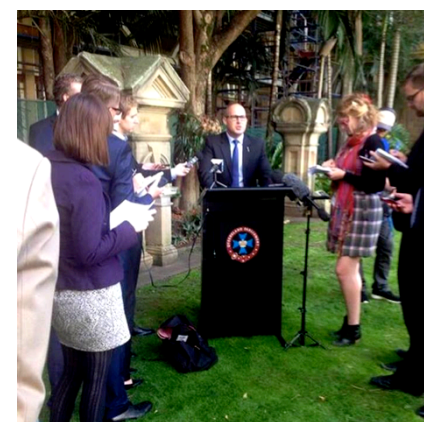
Queensland Economy weaker

Queensland's economy contracted by 0.4% over the year to June 2014, as the Newman Government's policies continue to bite. By way of comparison, **State Final Demand (SFD) was growing at 7.5% when the previous government left office.** SFD reflects the level of domestic spending in our economy, which has a direct impact on businesses and families.

The Treasurer says these results show his 'economic plan is working' despite a **fall in business investment of 12.4%**, a **fall in private investment of 7.5%** and a **fall in machinery and equipment investment of 19.4%** over the year to June quarter. By way of comparison, we saw **growth in business investment of 31.7%**, **growth in private investment of 23.2%** and **growth in machinery and equipment investment of 7.5%** under Labor.

The LNP said an increase in unemployment from **5.5% under Labor to 6.8%** in June was 'an improvement'. **It now sits at 7% - an 11-year high and the worst jobless rate in Australia.**

Statements like this are completely disconnected from ABS statistics and disconnected from what business owners and workers across the state are telling me. What's worse is that the Newman government's own budget papers forecast that **SFD will contract again this financial year by 1.25%.**



Curtis Pitt MP addresses the media

Economic conditions in Queensland are worse now than two and a half years ago. **We have slower economic growth and higher unemployment under the Newman Government than under Labor.** These facts are clearly set out in the government's own budget papers and in the official figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Opinion

It's now been two and a half years of cuts to jobs and services, attacks on workers, and people feeling let down by broken promises. During the election, Campbell Newman promised cheaper electricity, lower unemployment, investment in infrastructure and lower cost of living. Sadly every household knows that power prices have skyrocketed, unemployment is through the roof, and other costs like insurance taxes have all increased, making what was already expensive unaffordable for many.

Queensland is further away than ever from the promise of 4% unemployment – **it's at 7%.** FNQ has a youth unemployment crisis with a jobless rate of **over 20%** – significantly higher than the state rate of **13.4%**. This crisis not only affects our local economy now, but has dire consequences for our region's future. This isn't helped by soaring TAFE fees which are pricing many of our young people out of the market. So much for the promise of 10,000 additional apprenticeships.

Through hard-earned lessons, Labor knows that Queenslanders want our income-producing assets to stay in public hands for the long term. Queenslanders want more jobs and services and a stronger economy – not more cuts and more asset sales.

Despite the damage the Newman government has done, people are seeing an upside – they have less than six months to wait before sending this arrogant Government a message.

Curtis Pitt

Shadow Treasurer
Member for Mulgrave