



QNFS NEWS

February 2010

The State Government shows no sign of backing off on its plans to privatise public assets so our campaign must continue. This arrogant government is ploughing ahead with its asset sales plan despite over 80% of Queenslanders opposing the decision.

Adding to this public outrage is the fact that the government's original reason for the sell-off - to plug an alleged hole in the budget due to the Global Financial Crisis - just doesn't stack up anymore.

Academics and economists have unanimously said the government's privatisation proposal was "economically unsound" and required well informed discussion, not "spurious claims". The latest academic to weigh into the debate is Professor Ross Guest, a professor of economics at the Griffith Business School who says the sale of Queensland Motorways is "not a good deal for taxpayers".

What Prof Ross Guest said about selling Qld Motorways

"One way of effectively giving the private operator a higher toll is to set the sale price too low. On my calculations, the value of the tolling rights on Queensland Motorways is between \$5 billion and \$7 billion, depending on assumptions about revenue growth and interest rates.

"The sale price suggested by the Government of between \$3 billion and \$4 billion would therefore transfer wealth from Queensland taxpayers to private investors. By selling the tolling rights at a discount, the Government is effectively granting a higher toll, capitalised up front in the sale price – not a good deal for taxpayers.

"The Bligh Government sees its asset sale program as a quick fix to its budgetary problems. It is clearly no quick fix from the taxpayers' point of view.

Channel 7 exposes government lies

Channel 7 News has exposed the government's slim defence that it had no plans to privatise assets before the 2009 election. The report, which aired on 1 February, centres on two documents - an email regarding a potential buyer for Queensland Forestry and an October 2008 Cabinet advice about asset sales.

QCU General Secretary Ron Monaghan said the report was evidence that privatisation plans were in the works well before the March 2009 election and that the Queensland public was deliberately kept in the dark.

"This report proves what we've said all along. This government has been bending the truth and now it's been caught out.

"The government never consulted with the Queensland people about its plans and therefore had no mandate to proceed.

"With over 80% opposition to the plan, the government should now do the right thing and reverse its decision immediately."

PUBLIC RALLY AGAINST PRIVATISATION

- Tuesday 9 March, 2010
- 10:30am
- Roma St Forum (Roma St)
(followed by a march to Parliament House)

Come along and send a message to the Bligh Government that you don't support its privatisation plans.

Workers' rights trampled on in QR's rush to float

Rail unions have lodged an application in the Federal Court following Queensland Rail's failure to consult with its workers in the rush to float the company on the stock exchange.

The ASU, RTBU, AFULE, ETU and AMWU will seek up to \$660,000 in penalties following QR's breach of 20 provisions contained in enterprise bargaining agreements between the unions and Queensland Rail.

The EB agreements contain comprehensive "Consultation" clauses which state there must be genuine consultation with workers when any significant changes to the workplace are proposed.

"QR is not above the law in this matter - it cannot simply ignore existing workplace agreements just because the government has a privatisation agenda it's hell-bent on implementing," said QCU General Secretary, Ron Monaghan.

A directions hearing in the Federal Court is set for March 12, 2010.



www.qldnotforsale.org.au

The campaign so far...

Following Premier Bligh's 1 June 2009 privatisation announcement, the QCU has co-ordinated activities around Queensland garnering overwhelming public support for its "Queensland Not For Sale" campaign. Here's some of the highlights from the last nine months:

7 June 2009: First community rally outside the ALP State Conference.

21 June to 31 July: A five week regional tour of over 30 cities and towns kicks off in Cairns. The tour culminates in a rally outside Transport Minister Rachel Nolan's electorate office on 31 July.

3 July: A major rally is held in Brisbane with over 2000 in attendance.

30 August: Over 300 greet Community Cabinet in Bundaberg.

Early September: QCU-commissioned polling finds 89% of Queenslanders believe there is no need to sell-off public assets. Also, 56% of respondents said that privatising services meant it was less likely they would vote Labor in the next election.

Mid October: QCU agrees to talks with the government mediated by former Reserve Bank Governor, Bernie Fraser. QCU commissions Professor Bob Walker and Dr Betty Con Walker to attend the talks and prepare a report.

19 October: The QNFS campaign website is launched.

23 October: Our TV ad airs in Rockhampton and Cairns for two weeks. QCU General Secretary launches the ad in Brisbane and Rockhampton. A DL flyer is letterboxed in Rockhampton and Cairns-based electorates.

6 November: The TV ad airs in Townsville and the DL is letterboxed in the electorates of Townsville, Mundingburra and Thuringowa.

19 November: Professor Walker launches his report in Brisbane gaining extensive media coverage.

24 November: 21 prominent academics and economists openly condemn the government's privatisation proposal calling it "economically unsound".

29 November: A rally at the Western Suburbs Community Cabinet is held at the Ipswich Civic Centre.

18 December: Our special QNFS Christmas card is handed to commuters at rail and bus stations.

Not to mention the local stalls, politician visits, petition-signing activities and so much more!! But, the campaign continues at pace in 2010.