



Speech by

BRUCE DAVIDSON

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

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PERFORMANCE OF MINISTERS

Mr DAVIDSON (Noosa—LP) (6.15 p.m.): Tonight I rise to speak in the debate on this motion to highlight the disastrous performance of the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Women's Policy and Minister for Fair Trading. This is a Minister who got a taste of ministerial leather and went back and devoured the entire cow. This is a Minister who believed that it was her right to spend money willy-nilly—not on consumer education or Aboriginal communities, as would be expected, but on luxurious bathroom fittings and ministerial office upgrades.

The Beattie Cabinet consists of 18 Ministers, as did the previous Borbidge Cabinet. That means that when Labor gained Government there were 18 existing ministerial offices. When we have raised this issue previously, the Minister has claimed that hers is a new Ministry and therefore did not come with an existing ministerial office. However, what the Minister forgets or has not been intelligent enough to figure out yet is that in the Borbidge Cabinet there was a Minister for the Environment and a Minister for Natural Resources. In the Beattie Cabinet these two Ministries are the responsibility of just one Minister, who can occupy only one ministerial office at one time. So why did the Minister not occupy the vacant office of the former Environment Minister? The truth is that she did not think it was good enough for her. Therefore the Minister just dug deep into the public purse and spent an extraordinary \$600,000, which could have been spent on consumer education or on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

If that was the only mistake of the Minister then the public may perceive that she was doing a good job, but this sorry saga does not stop there. The incompetence of the Minister for Fair Trading surfaced yet again for all to see, especially those involved in the building industry. Viewers of the Stateline program would have witnessed the Minister being caught out first-hand, trying to bluff her way through an in-depth interview on her own supposed reforms to the Queensland building industry. This was a performance that proves that Gwyneth Paltrow has absolutely nothing to fear from Minister Spence.

The Minister has also been a little less than truthful when it comes to the security of payment issue. In her ministerial statement on 4 March she said, "Our coalition predecessors dithered and did nothing constructive." However, in her press release on 2 March, the Minister acknowledged that the Labor package combines initiatives and elements of the 1997 ISC report prepared and introduced by the former coalition Government. In fact, five of the Minister's highlights of her alleged reform package outlined in her press release are initiatives announced by the then Public Works and Housing Minister, Dr Watson, in his release of the coalition's security of payment package on 24 November 1997.

I find it a bit rich for the Government to claim that we did nothing when it was Minister Spence who failed to meet her deadline and in fact broke a promise given to the people of Queensland by the Premier in an interview on Carolyn Tucker's program on 20 July 1998. He said—

"We all know what needs to be done. Let's do it.

...

We will make a decision on it and everyone will know exactly where we stand by the end of August."

This just goes to show just how much credence the people of Queensland can give to the words of the Premier and his incompetent sidekick. Gwyneth Paltrow has absolutely nothing to fear from Minister Spence.

In the background, bubbling away, was the farce of the \$6,700 payment to a Labor mate. The Minister came into this Parliament during the last sitting, threw her hands in the air and accused Opposition members of knowing nothing about the separation of powers. She set herself up as the almighty, but this week we revealed that she had a 45-minute teleconference with Raelene Kelly on the day before the committee made a decision on the compensation pay-out. I have asked the Minister a number of times about her director-general's involvement with Ms Kelly. We have been advised that Ms O'Donnell had a lunch with Ms Kelly before this decision was made. That is the information we have.

Everyone in the Motor Trades Association is talking about the Minister. They put out a press release today. I suggest that the Minister gets a copy of it and reads it. They have no confidence in her administration of her portfolio. They are so fearful that the \$55m fund is under threat. It is not the Minister's money or Government money; it is industry money. It is money that has been contributed by the motor traders and people in the real estate industry. We have a Socialist Left Minister in charge of the \$55m fidelity fund. People in the motor trades industry are fearful that this Minister has opened up an avenue for every aggrieved person in this State who buys a car with which they are dissatisfied to make a claim on that fund. That is the real issue. I suggest that the Minister reads that press release. Those people are crowing from the walls that they have no confidence in her.

Why did Ms Kelly get compensation? Why did the Minister not offer Ms Loski access to that fund? She did not even pay her the courtesy of advising her that she had access to that committee. Given that the Minister allowed Raelene Kelly to access that committee, why did the Minister not advise Monica Loski that she had the same access to seek reimbursement for that used car?

Time expired.
