



Speech by

**Hon. HENRY PALASZCZUK**

**MEMBER FOR INALA**

Hansard 16 October 2003

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

**Hon. H. PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (10.13 a.m.): Mr Speaker—

**Mr LINGARD:** Point of order, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** A point of order.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Those sworn in to the so-called—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! We have a point of order.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:**—new-look Howard ministry last week must promise to—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! We have a point of order.

**Mr LINGARD:** As to standing order 107, I move—

That the minister be not heard.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Mr Speaker, am I being gagged?

**Mr SPEAKER:** You are indeed. I am going to put the motion.

**Question—**That the minister be not further heard—put; and the House divided—

**AYES, 19—**Copeland, E. Cunningham, C. Foley, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Lee Long, Lingard, Malone, Pratt, Quinn, E. Roberts, Rowell, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg. Tellers: Lester, Watson

**NOES, 61—**Attwood, Barry, Barton, Beattie, Bell, Bligh, Boyle, Bredhauer, Briskey, Choi, L. Clark, Croft, Cummins, J. Cunningham, Edmond, Fenlon, Fouras, Hayward, Jarratt, Keech, Lavarch, Lee, Livingstone, Lucas, Mackenroth, Male, McGrady, Mickel, Miller, Molloy, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, Nuttall, Palaszcuk, Pearce, Phillips, Pitt, Poole, Purcell, Reilly, Reynolds, N. Roberts, Robertson, Rodgers, Rose, Schwarten, C. Scott, D. Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Strong, Struthers, C. Sullivan, Welford, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: T. Sullivan, Reeves

Resolved in the **negative**.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Thank you, honourable members. Thank you for your vote of confidence, government members.

**Government members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** One of those issues is the ABC's request for additional funding to establish a dedicated TV news service in north Queensland and extend the broadcast reach of Triple J and Radio National into regional and rural communities. This proposal for the new TV service came from the ABC following the decision by Southern Cross Broadcasting in 2001 to close its bureaux in Cairns and Townsville. There can be no doubt that north Queensland had been disadvantaged with reduced local TV news following the Southern Cross Broadcasting closures. The ABC sought to fill that void in local TV news coverage for 400,000 residents by basing a TV news service in Townsville with a footprint from Mossman in the north, Atherton to the west and Bowen to the south. I would urge the new Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Services, De-Anne Kelly, to show an interest and ensure that the ABC proposal is reconsidered.

In terms of ABC's Triple J and News Radio services, the ABC had proposed an extension of News Radio to all Australian communities with a population of more than 10,000. Currently, News Radio, which broadcasts federal parliament, is heard only in south-east Queensland. In terms of Triple

J, the ABC had proposed extending the Triple J radio coverage to Emerald and Gympie. As we all know, the former federal Communications Minister, Richard Alston, held a vendetta against the ABC. Not only did he ensure the ABC funding requests were denied he also questioned the impartiality of the national broadcaster. He has now gone. We now have a new Communications Minister in Darryl Williams. I believe the new minister should re-examine the ABC funding issues. The proposals for a dedicated TV service in north Queensland and taking Triple J and News Radio to more rural and regional communities warrant reconsideration from the federal government. We want to see a new approach from the new minister. I certainly hope that this is not a case of B1 and B2 and that Williams is simply a carbon copy of Alston. The ABC and its audience, particularly in rural Australia, deserve a better reception from the federal government, and this new minister should ensure that that happens.

Finally, this morning I picked up a copy of the *Country Life* which says 'Nats back Telstra sale'. It states that a handful of National Party members oppose the privatisation of Telstra. One person was Miss Hulls from New South Wales. I did not see the Leader of the Opposition's name mentioned. He is missing in action! Where does he stand with policy in relation to the full sale of Telstra? Let the people of Queensland know.