




Speech by

Annastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard Tuesday, 5 June 2012

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.08 pm): It is a privilege to speak in the address-in-reply debate as the member for Inala. I thank the people of my electorate for returning me for a third time to represent them in this House. I will continue to work hard each and every day for every one of my constituents. It is also an honour to speak today as the Leader of the Opposition and leader of the state parliamentary Labor Party. At any time in the history of our party—whether we are in government or not and whatever number of seats we hold—it is a job that presents challenges and opportunities. Right now we face both. At the March election voters passed their verdict on us and made their views loud and clear. Election night sent Labor a message to which we have already begun responding.

The voters made a choice to give the LNP an historic majority and to reduce Labor to seven MPs in this House. They told us that we had stopped listening to them so they stopped listening to us. They told us that we needed to do better—and we will. It is up to me and my parliamentary colleagues to help rebuild our party. There is also a review team working within the party to draft reform measures.

Members of my parliamentary team have already started the process of reconnecting with communities and organisations right across our state. In doing so, we have already heard considerable feedback about where we went wrong and what we must do to regain the trust of voters. As leader, I will ensure that we will act on that feedback. I want Queenslanders to know that we are serious about rebuilding our party, we are serious about reaching out and rebuilding links to the wider community and we are serious about welcoming new ideas as we develop new policies. We have a big job ahead of us, but we undertake it with enthusiasm and 100 per cent commitment. As I have said repeatedly, my team is prepared to be the hardest working opposition in Australia. We are prepared to work hard every day to rebuild our party. We will also be working hard to hold this government to account.

In our work so far in moving around and talking to individuals, organisations and local communities we have not only heard where Labor went wrong. Surprisingly, in just a few months since the election people are also telling us where the LNP government is already going wrong. The loudest message that is coming through to us is that Queenslanders are already sick and tired of this government playing the blame game. They want the government to get on and govern, to deliver what they said they would deliver. They are sick of hearing that anything and everything that goes wrong in the state is all the fault of the previous government. All we have heard from the government benches in the past two months is that, no matter the problem, it is all Labor's fault. I hope that it does not come to pass that if Queensland loses the next State of Origin game the government will say—wait for it—that it is all Labor's fault.

At the same time, this government is prepared to take credit for projects started by the former Labor government. It is prepared to announce major resource projects initiated by Labor and claim them as its own. It is prepared to stand in front of projects initiated by Labor and suggest that it is responsible. Recently, the health minister has been visiting such projects. In Cairns, he inspected the project redeveloping the city's major hospital at a cost of more than \$455 million. Similarly in Townsville, he expressed his satisfaction at the progress on expansion work being carried out at a cost of almost \$440 million. Both of those major health projects were initiated under the previous Labor government. The former government adopted a budget strategy that enabled such projects to get off the drawing board.

These projects also enabled jobs to be generated or safeguarded in the building industry. But in government the LNP goes out of its way to attack the very budget strategy that helped deliver those projects and secure those jobs. I wonder if those opposite will be as negative and as destructive when the time comes to have their photos taken cutting the ribbon on these major projects. I wonder if they are prepared to admit that these major projects would never have been built if the decision had been left to them.

Another example is the Northern Busway, costing almost \$450 million and started by the Labor government. It will be officially opened soon. There will be an open day. TransLink has already advised us. Naturally, the transport minister will be there, in all his glory, taking the credit for the opening of the Northern Busway. No doubt he, too, will be ignoring the fact that if the LNP had its way that piece of world-class transport infrastructure would never have got off the ground. He, like other ministers, is playing the 'blame Labor' game.

But as I have already noted, voters are getting tired of it. The LNP may not have moved on from the election and it may think and behave as if it is still in opposition, but we are looking to the future and we will continue to do so. As I said earlier, we are also working hard to hold this government to account. Already, we have been able to highlight a range of promises broken by this government in just the first two months. The most cold-hearted broken promise is the way the government has busied itself sacking government workers when it said that it would not. The Labor Party has always stood for jobs. We have always stood up for people in jobs, those wanting jobs and those at risk of losing their jobs. That is why we have been pursuing this government over its broken promises on government jobs. It is why we will continue to pursue them in this House.

Today we heard the Premier admit for the first time that 41,000 government jobs are at risk. We also heard the Minister for Housing and Public Works, who is sitting in this House, list all the business units within his department that are likely to be wound back, sold off or privatised—QFleet, QBuild, Goprint and others. Hundreds more jobs are clearly going.

An honourable member: And a lot more to come.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take the interjection. There are more going.

Dr Flegg: And they will all be reviewed.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They will all be reviewed. Let it be stated on the public record that the minister today has admitted that. The LNP government has not only broken its promises on something as fundamental as jobs; it has broken its promise on key elements of its major policy of reducing the cost of living for Queenslanders. It has walked away from its commitment to keep car registration costs down. It has broken its promise to keep all household power bills down. Just last week we heard that 250,000 families would be worse off. If you have an electric hot-water system or a pool, you will be slugged an extra \$69 a year.

This government's first capital works project is a new office block in central Brisbane for the Premier and his ministers. Its first major announcement of a resource project was bungled by the Deputy Premier. He preferred to play politics than ensure that the proper processes were followed—a process that he could not even explain in the House today. The government's ministers treat this House with disdain by failing to answer legitimate questions. Even the Premier has put this House on notice that he will pick and choose the questions he answers. On the ABC's 7.30 *Queensland* program the Deputy Premier said that ministers admitted they were having trouble answering opposition questions. In fact, they are puzzled. Why? Apparently, because we, the opposition, do not ask them the right questions. He says that we need to ask them questions that do not need answers containing facts and figures. It is no wonder that after just two months this government is a disappointment to so many. It is no wonder many people come up to me every day and say how sorry they are that they voted for the LNP. They are disappointed by its broken promises.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They are very disappointed. In the election campaign and on election night the Premier said that his administration would behave with humility, dignity and grace. People say to me that they are yet to see any of those qualities. Instead, they see a know-it-all government that has already stopped listening. They see a government that is prepared to wind the clock back to the days of Joh Bjelke-Petersen when it comes to a range of issues. It is no coincidence that one of the first acts of the Newman government was to abolish the Premier's Literary Awards. As the Premier said, it was a small item in the context of a multibillion dollar state budget, but the signal it gave was that this government does not place much or any value on a vibrant, home-grown arts sector. That decision has not given the sector and those working in it much confidence for the future. It is the opposition's role to ensure that the voters of Queensland know how fast and how far this government is running away from the promises it made. We will also be highlighting the hypocrisy that is already on display by this government.

Over the past three years the Inala electorate has benefited from a wide range of exciting projects. I do not have time to canvass all the positive projects that have been delivered in Inala, but I would like to share with the House some of the main ones. Public transport within the Inala electorate has dramatically increased over the past three years. A major milestone was the construction of the new Richlands Railway Station which has revolutionised transport in our community. It provides a state-of-the-art station, parking for more than 650 vehicles and a bus interchange making trips to and from the city a breeze. The Richlands station was not the only addition to rail infrastructure in the electorate. The Darra station underwent a \$24 million upgrade, part of the \$475 million Darra to Springfield upgrade which will see the train line extended to Springfield by the end of 2013. The residents of the Inala electorate saw further upgrades to their public transport services with improvements to the No.100 bus service and the introduction of a brand new service to the Centenary Village area.

I am passionate about education. Education is the foundation of life, which is why I was pleased that Inala was one of the electorates to be included in the State Schools of Tomorrow program. The program allowed for the renewal of Glenala State High School and five primary schools: Durack, Inala, Richlands East, Serviceton South and the Western Suburbs State Special School. This program allowed for the complete modernisation of classrooms and facilities, new buildings, refurbishment of existing buildings, new play equipment, landscaping and state-of-the-art technology such as computers and electronic smartboards. This multimillion dollar renewal of our schools will not only benefit the students who attend them but also the wider community through the leasing out of school facilities such as school ovals and classroom halls for various activities. Principals have reported to me that as a result students and their families are taking more pride in their school and their education. Students are now excited to come to school to learn in their new high-tech state-of-the-art facilities.

The people of Camira had a great win towards the end of last term. Over 24 hectares of land in Camira was handed over from the Queensland government to the Ipswich City Council. The land was handed over to the council to preserve as green space for the many families and residents to enjoy without fear of it being developed. In addition, the local councillor, Councillor David Morrison, and I worked hard to ensure that the additional powerlines earmarked to be located on Old Logan Road will actually go underground.

Community groups are the lifeline of our community. They are the ones that fill many of the voids that local, state and federal governments simply cannot. My electorate is fortunate enough to have many different organisations all providing assistance in their own way. Day in, day out people turn to my electorate office and to me for support in relation to housing. It is a big issue and one that impacts on many families, not just in my electorate, but throughout Queensland. I hope that the Minister for Housing takes time to listen to families before he embarks upon the reforms he has been speaking about. A house provided by the government is not a commodity; it is a home, it is where families are raised. Many people in my electorate have been dismayed that the first project of this LNP government is a brand-new office block for themselves when I believe that the focus of the Minister for Housing and Public Works should have clearly been on providing more housing to families.

We have also been fortunate enough to welcome the RSPCA to the Inala electorate. The RSPCA was dramatically affected by the 2011 floods at their old home at Yeronga and in December its new home at Wacol was officially opened. It will cater for up to 700 animals at a time. I encourage all to visit and support the RSPCA at its new home at Wacol when thinking about choosing a small addition to their family.

As many members of this House know, it is impossible to run an election and become a member in this place without the support of many. The success of the campaign was due to the tireless work of many volunteers and branch members who continued the good fight no matter what was thrown at them. Whilst it is impossible to name everyone who helped, I would like to thank them all and to mention a few: Sue, who gives up her time at each election to facilitate the smooth running of my postal vote campaign; Pat for assisting with putting up the signs right across the electorate; Melana, who, no matter what was asked of her, was happy to sit at the roadside with signs or stuff envelopes; Shane and Rob, who ran my pre-poll stall in the blazing sun; Charlie's Angels—Audrey, Harriet and Lara—for sitting at shopping centres; the Golden Girls—Evie, Ethel, Adel, Glenda and Thelma—for sitting on stalls and mobile offices nearly every day at the Inala Civic Centre and Richlands Plaza; my electorate staff, Melanie and Charles, who continue to do the day-to-day electorate work; Councillor Milton Dick; Darren Cann, my right-hand man; and all members of the Forest Lake and Inala ALP branch. Can I also thank my family and friends. In particular, I would like to thank my father, Henry, who was there for me throughout the campaign and who became a grandfather again on Saturday night to Lucy May who was born to Nadia and Rob. Everybody is doing well. I am going to be the godmother.

Mr Stevens: It wasn't you, obviously.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, definitely not. Our local campaign was run and won on the theme 'delivering for our local community', which is evident from the various programs and projects which have been

undertaken in the Inala community over the last three years and that have been delivered. I look forward to serving the constituents of Inala for the next three years and continuing to deliver for our great community.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to welcome all the new members of the House. I have been listening to many of their speeches. They come from very different backgrounds and they have been elected to serve their communities. I want to place on the public record for those new members that being a member of parliament is a tough job. It requires working seven days a week, going to events on weekends, but fundamentally it requires listening to people who come through your door. If there is one piece of good advice I would like to pass on to you, which is something that my father shared with me, it is to remember that whoever comes through that door has a story to tell. They have come to you sometimes as the last resort because you are the only person who can actually help them in their time of need. So please, when someone does come in, take the time to listen. Represent all of your constituents. In the chamber we have the toing and froing about whether you are Labor or LNP, but when you are a member of parliament you are there to represent everyone. I welcome the new members of parliament and I hope you enjoy your time in this House.