


Speech by

Annastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard Thursday, 21 June 2012

ROCKHAMPTON, SHADOW CABINET

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.56 pm): Last week I had the pleasure to convene a meeting of the shadow cabinet in Rockhampton. Less than three months after the state election, Labor took its entire shadow cabinet beyond the south-east to the great Central Queensland city of Rockhampton. This visit reflected the commitment that I made soon after I was honoured to be elected leader of the parliamentary Labor Party that we are determined to return to our core values, reconnect with communities and rebuild our party.

While the Newman government seems prepared to turn its back on its election promises, particularly in relation to jobs, Labor is getting back to basics. I also find it interesting that the Newman government, with its massive majority and all its resources, still has not met outside the south-east. It seems that the Premier, the former Lord Mayor, is more interested in being Premier of Brisbane rather than Premier of Queensland.

The visit to Rockhampton started at the Roma Street Railway Station, where the South-East Queensland members of the shadow cabinet met to board the tilt train. It was a great trip. As the member for Rockhampton mentioned in his speech, we were met in Rockhampton by the member for Rockhampton and the deputy leader, Tim Mulherin. I would like to thank the Queensland Rail staff, who do an excellent job. They are very passionate about their job and they made the trip a very comfortable one.

We spent the next few days meeting with locals, visiting workplaces in Rockhampton and Yeppoon, and learning more about local issues. Nursing delegates told us of their concerns about the LNP's plans to cut front-line nursing positions in Emerald. TAFE representatives told us of their concerns about job security in light of the government's proposed shake-up of TAFE colleges across this state. Teachers expressed their grave concerns about the government's pay offer and the Independent Public Schools program, and the impact that these policies will have on job security for teachers, class sizes and workloads.

I would particularly like to thank those teachers who spent the time to sit down with me for more than an hour after school to outline some of the issues confronting them as a result of the Newman government's plans to wind back their working conditions. The LNP's policies look likely to result in increased class sizes in state schools in direct contravention of advice from education officials that smaller class sizes are better for our students.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Rockhampton Mayor, Councillor Margaret Strelow; Central Queensland University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Scott Bowman; and the many community and business leaders from the region who met with us during the visit.

We are determined; we are serious about reconnecting with the wider community. We are working hard to offer the people of Queensland an alternative to the disappointment that this Newman government has shown us in the past few months. We will be working towards becoming the hardest working opposition in Australia and we pledge to hold the Newman government accountable for its mounting broken election commitments.