



Speech by

Annastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING AMENDMENT REGULATION (NO. 1): DISALLOWANCE

Ms PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (7.51 pm): I rise to support the member for South Brisbane's disallowance motion in relation to the waste levy. For the benefit of new members I will give a bit of history because they were not in this House back in June 2010 on World Environment Day when the previous Labor government announced that this policy was about creating jobs and cutting landfill. That was the main purpose of the Labor government going down this path.

What are some of the waste facts? Let us get that on the public record. Queensland generates more than 32 million tonnes of waste. That is the equivalent of 16 Suncorp Stadiums filled to the roof every year and that number is growing. It includes heavy industry waste placed in indefinite storage. Secondly, Queensland recycles only about a third of its waste—one of the worst rates in the country. Thirdly, Queensland is the only mainland state to not have had a levy on non-domestic waste. This is the other premise that I do not think members understand. This levy did not impact on domestic household waste. That was made very clear.

Mr Newman interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: If the Premier wants to interject I am more than happy to take his interjections from his seat. While the Premier is here I am happy to talk about the Premier's position. When he was Lord Mayor he came out in support of this. When he was Lord Mayor he had green credentials and he knew that recycling was a big issue. He supported the then environment minister introducing this into the House. This was a fundamental reform bringing Queensland into line with the rest of Australia, essentially making sure that we were going to be environmentally responsible and at the same time generating jobs for Queenslanders.

What the member for South Brisbane said is absolutely correct: what was happening then, what is happening now and what will happen in the future is that those councils that are in northern New South Wales will continue to dump their waste into Queensland. Queensland will become the dumping ground for northern New South Wales. Do not be under any illusion here. These are the facts. We know that councils in northern New South Wales have used Queensland as a dumping ground and they will continue to do so.

The Treasurer talks about cutting waste. This was about cutting waste and recycling. It was about changing business practices and people's attitudes. What else did this waste levy do? It actually brought in an income stream as well. The new government wants to cut an income stream of some \$300 million over four years. That is what the government are doing by repealing this waste levy. This is about changing people's behaviour; it is about generating jobs. At the time the minister for environment stated—

The strategy sets out a new direction for waste management in Queensland, by establishing goals and targets for waste avoidance, recycling and resource recovery over a 10-year period.

The waste strategy levy had a vision to grow green jobs and value reusing and recycling materials. We want to see more recycling and the reuse of waste as a first option before it is sent to landfill. I had the opportunity to go to Archerfield and look at companies that are actually creating new businesses by

recycling waste which means that waste does not have to go to landfill. As a result a brand new industry is created that generates the jobs I mention.

Mr Newman interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Once again if the Premier has something to say I am more than happy to take his interjection if he sits in his seat. As the member for South Brisbane said, every other state has a levy. Those opposite are moving Queensland out of line with every other state.

Mr Young: How does it generate jobs?

Ms PALASZCZUK: If you were listening, I explained it very clearly to you.

Mr Young interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Burleigh, you have had a pretty good go. There are too many interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: What were the third-party comments that were made when the introduction of this waste levy was announced? Many organisations came out on the public record supporting it. The Queensland Conservation Council said, 'It should double recycling rates in line with government targets.' The World Wildlife Fund said, 'This innovative "trash to treasure" approach ... puts Queensland ahead of other states in terms of funding new protected areas.' The Wilderness Society described the initiatives funded from the waste levy as 'some very important conservation commitments which we strongly welcome'.

The Local Government Association of Queensland said that there were 'sensible, equitable initiatives in a new waste strategy'. The Council of Mayors South East Queensland website still states that 'waste remains a key regional priority for South-East Queensland' and that a key item of focus is 'future waste levy funded projects'. And, of course, let us not forget what the now Premier said in March last year as Lord Mayor of Brisbane City Council: 'Council strongly supports a levy implementation date of 1 July 2012,' and his words in the council chamber that 'waste going to landfill is still requiring significant attention'.

If the Premier wants to contradict me, if he wants to get up here and put it on the public record that what he said in council is now completely different to what he has said as Premier, he has the opportunity to speak in the debate tonight. He has the opportunity to stand up in the House and put it on the public record. Premier, that is my challenge to you tonight. Stay in the chamber, stand up and put it on the public record.

Mr Gibson: You changed the draft bill.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No. This is a backflip—one minute we support it and the next minute we don't. That is what the Premier did.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gympie will cease interjecting.

Ms Trad: The party bosses told him not to.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will take that interjection from the member for South Brisbane: probably because the party bosses told him so. The money generated from this fund will go back not only—

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order. If the Minister for the Arts wants to interject, she should go back to her chair. She is interjecting consistently.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind all members that if they do wish to interject they need to be in their seats.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am encouraged that the Premier is in his seat and might be getting ready to stand up and contribute to this worthwhile debate, because we would like to know why your position changed, why you no longer support the generation of jobs, why you do not—

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We know that you are cutting 20,000 to 30,000 jobs. We know you have the figures, but you are not telling us.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will address her comments through the chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We would be more than happy for the Premier, at any time, to come into the chamber and tell us how many jobs are going. We know that the government knows. In Queensland Rail, 2,200 jobs are going. We know that the CBR Committee is meeting and that those figures are going through the CBR Committee process.

I return to the disallowance motion before the House: we know that this was the right policy. We know that this was good policy for the creation of jobs and that it was good environmental policy, because the money would then go into environmental projects such as koala habitat, North Stradbroke Island and

Cape York. I am quite sure that in this place there are LNP members who support those worthwhile projects. It is disappointing that the government has chosen to go down this path. At the end of the day, the people of Queensland will be at a loss because this is consistent with what has happened in other states. Essentially, we will see Queensland become the dumping ground for New South Wales. We will have more of their waste. Because there are no costs imposed, they will avoid their taxes, they will avoid their fees and they will avoid their levies by bringing their rubbish over the NSW-Queensland border and dumping it on our doorstep. That is what this House is doing tonight and it is very disappointing.

(Time expired)