




Speech by

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MEMBER FOR INALA

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SUPREME AND DISTRICT COURTS COMPLEX

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.39 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise to commend the opening of the new Supreme and District courts complex in Brisbane. This \$600 million project, fully funded by the former Labor government, will help transform our legal district. I congratulate all involved in its inception, design and construction.

While I am sure those opposite will be lining up to take credit for this magnificent new development once it is opened tomorrow, it is worth noting that it took a Labor government to get it off the ground and see it through to completion. This is an investment in architecture and public infrastructure that Brisbane and Queensland can be proud of. It is a fitting tribute to the former government's commitment to a fair Queensland delivering a modern and inclusive justice system for all Queenslanders. The state-of-the-art design doubles the floor space of the former complex and allows 45 courts to operate when at full capacity. That is 13 more than were available in the old District and Supreme courts complex across the road, and that is a true reflection of a continually growing Queensland. It means that more trials will be able to be staged each year, cutting down on backlogs and offering a more efficient system of justice to all Queenslanders.

The new courts complex also stands as a testament to our investment in public infrastructure, even in times of difficulties. Indeed, you might say that the courts stand as a reminder of the importance of public investment, especially in times of economic challenges. Investment in the complex created approximately 5,000 jobs over the period of its construction—a time that included the global financial crisis and the worst natural disasters in Queensland's recorded history. The project utilised the skills of thousands of carpenters, electricians, plumbers, tilers and painters, amongst others.

The building also represents the respect that the courts and the administration of justice should be accorded. Amongst the legal community, in the broader society and in this parliament, the role of the judiciary should be respected and the separation of powers should be honoured. Unfortunately, on the eve of the opening of this magnificent new complex we are seeing that not even our judicial system is safe from this slash-and-burn government. Make no mistake: the judiciary is concerned about what is to come from this government. I have been approached by senior members of the judiciary who have voiced their strong concern about and opposition to the plans this government has to scrap the important State Reporting Bureau, which is responsible for transcribing the events within our courtrooms. They also question the motivation behind the planned closure of several courthouses throughout the south-east corner. So let us make sure that, just as the buildings stand to represent the strength of our legal system, we give respect to the practitioners and the judges that keep our system alive and thriving. I want to give my best wishes to the judges, lawyers, court staff and administration and support staff who will enjoy the new facilities as they carry out their very important roles in the administration of our legal system here in Queensland.