




Speech by

Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard Thursday, 23 August 2012

PUBLIC SERVICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (4.39 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Public Service and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As the Manager of Opposition Business has already indicated, the opposition will be opposing this bill. The bill is ill conceived, rushed and has not had sufficient consultation to ensure it will work appropriately. We cannot in all conscience support a bill that has not been adequately scrutinised by the committee system and had the required input from stakeholders who will be affected by these changes. And what do we see this afternoon? This afternoon we see the Attorney-General come into this chamber and produce a series of amendments—four to five pages of amendments—with no consultation. They were not raised at the committee. You did not discuss this at the committee. You have come in here and what you have done is absolutely and utterly disgraceful. I cannot understand it. You have had little consultation in relation to this bill, and then you come in here with five pages of amendments at the last moment. We want to question the Attorney-General more as to what is the purpose of these amendments. Are these amendments because there is current legal action afoot in the Supreme Court by the unions? Is this why you have come in? Yes? You are sitting there smirking, so I will take that smirking as acceptance. I will take it as acceptance.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! The opposition leader will direct her comments through the chair and will refrain from using the word 'you'.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Of course, Madam Deputy Speaker. What we have seen once again by this government—and I raised it in this House earlier this afternoon—is no decent consultation. The committee system was set up as a bipartisan initiative in that issues would go to a committee for a certain period of time.

Mr Stevens: You were a part of the CLA that agreed to it. You agreed to it!

Ms PALASZCZUK: You want to talk about the CLA, Manager of Government Business. It is dominated by the LNP where we very rarely get a say.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have asked the opposition leader to stop referring to members as 'you'.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. When this bill went to the committee for discussion, the Queensland Council of Unions lodged an objection to the short time frames for consultation on this bill. This was particularly exacerbated by the fact that a similar short time frame had been allowed on the amendments brought in earlier this year. The Queensland Law Society, which has been particularly diligent in providing written submission after written submission on much of the legislation so far referred to committees, has again noted the society's concern over these 'exceptionally short reporting time frames'. It felt that, given the severely truncated opportunity for review of the amending legislation, an in-depth analysis has not been possible. It is possible that there are issues relating to fundamental legislative principles or unintended drafting consequences which we have not identified. It is a shame that we undertook a massive review and restructure of the committee system of this parliament such a short time ago and so far in this parliament we have seen very little opportunity for optimal use of

the committee to scrutinise the legislation. This afternoon more amendments have come in here, once again not being able to be scrutinised by the process—the process that has been set up.

When we are talking about the Public Service, I am more than happy to talk about the job cuts that this government is making. There is only one thing government workers need to remember, and these are the words. These are the words that government workers need to remember: 'Public servants have nothing to fear from me.' Who said that? Who said those words to the *Brisbane Times* on 4 April 2011? Or these words: 'But the Public Service will grow,' said at an LNP news conference on 20 February 2012? Those were the words the Premier and his Treasurer were using before they won office. But after their election victory, what did they say? The Premier said there are 20,000 more public servants than Queensland can afford. The Treasurer said—

We on this side know that a real job is in the private sector.

That is what the Treasurer said. That is how much the Treasurer of this state thinks of government workers. That is how much the Treasurer and the government of this state value government workers. I want to tell the House that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of government workers out there who are feeling anxiety, who are feeling stress, who are feeling periods of depression because they have no certainty. And who has created this uncertainty?

A government member: Labor!

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, it is not Labor.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, it is not Labor.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, it is not Labor. No, it is not the media. The people who are responsible for creating this fear and uncertainty are the members sitting on the government benches. That is who is responsible for creating this fear and this uncertainty. Why would any government worker want to trust this LNP ever again? In fact, why would anyone trust it to keep its word on anything? As I said earlier this week, only the member for Gregory has stood up for his constituents on job cuts, fighting for jobs in Emerald at the Transport and Main Roads office. The member for Gregory said, 'Jobs will go over my dead body.' He said that it was the job of MPs to stand up for local jobs, adding, 'That's what I'm elected to do.' That is what every member of this chamber should be doing. Every member in this House should be standing up for job growth and the delivery of services in their electorates. A ReachTEL poll was released this afternoon, and I would urge members to have a look at that poll very closely.

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. I fail to see in any way the relevance of a ReachTEL poll on the bill that is being discussed at this present time. It does not have any relevance to the bill.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will remain relevant to the bill.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am speaking about the Public Service and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Question 6 of the ReachTEL poll asked, 'Which of the following do you think should be the primary focus of your local member?' Some 79 per cent of respondents in Sandgate said supporting local jobs and services. Here is the member for Sandgate. Is the member for Sandgate standing up for local jobs and services? No! In Townsville 77.8 per cent of respondents said that they should be standing up for supporting local jobs and services. Is the member for Townsville standing up for local jobs and services? No! In Brisbane Central—and it is a pity the member for Brisbane Central is not here—once again over 70 per cent of people who responded said that they should be standing up for supporting local jobs and services.

When you are elected as a member of parliament to this House you are elected to stand up for your constituents. You are elected to stand in this place and to stand up for the jobs that are in your local communities and to stand up for services. And what have we seen from this government? What have we seen in the last five months? Disappointment, job cuts, cuts to services. That is what we have seen. That is what we have seen and that is what we are going to continue to see under this government. We all know what it means: Queenslanders losing their jobs, people suffering anxiety as they wait to hear their fate, people crying at work as they wait to hear whether they will be able to pay the mortgage next week, ordinary Queensland workers who do not know whether they are front line or not because the goalposts keep moving.

Local communities do not know whether their courthouse doors will remain open. Court transcription services are being threatened with being sent offshore. School cleaners and groundspeople are unsure whether they will be able to continue looking after our schools. Who did we see protesting here this week? Who did we see at the doors of the Parliament House? We saw the ambulance officers and we saw the firefighters. Why were they here? Because there is no certainty about their jobs. Who else did we see?

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! There is too much noise across the chamber and I cannot hear the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Who else did we see here this week? The teachers.

Mr Bleijie: The Socialist Alliance.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, we saw the teachers here. They are uncertain about their jobs, uncertain about the future.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections across the chamber and I cannot hear the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Trad: And those people as well.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I did not name any particular member. All members were loud. The directive was at all members.

Ms PALASZCZUK: This government has the opportunity to end the fear and uncertainty. They have the opportunity—

Mr Bleijie: Respect the chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: These are the words from Pinocchio over here.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is what the *Courier-Mail* said about you. The *Courier-Mail* said that you were Pinocchio, not telling the truth.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have asked the opposition leader to stop calling members 'you' and stop referring to members as 'you'. Please direct your comments through the chair and call members by their proper title.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The government has the opportunity to end the fear and to end the uncertainty. By coming in here and continuing to change the goalposts, by continuing to make changes to legislation without consultation, by coming in here and moving amendments en masse that no-one has even had the chance to look at, goes against everything that the Labor Party and we here on this side believe in. The time to end this uncertainty is now and the LNP has the opportunity to do this once and for all.

(Time expired)