




Speech by

Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard Tuesday, 13 November 2012

NEWMAN GOVERNMENT, PERFORMANCE

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.16 am): Yet again what we have seen today is another daily dose of the soap opera that is the Newman government. This is not a weekly soap opera; this is a daily soap opera that has Queenslanders glued to their screens for all the wrong reasons. But it has all the right elements: bad acting, woeful scripts, appalling direction, story-lines that defy belief and that continue to change day by day.

Let us recap a few episodes as I think it is worthwhile updating the House. Today we have heard from the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Mr Bruce Flegg. What we have seen is a couple of stories about whether the lobbyists register that was tabled after estimates is a true and accurate record. This has been disputed by his sacked former senior media adviser. As I raised in the House this morning, I have asked the Speaker to look at this matter in some detail because I believe it could have been a deliberate misleading of the House. It is now up to the Speaker to decide whether or not that goes to the Ethics Committee.

We also had the Premier talk about delegations that he had made in regard to dealings with RTI information. I want to recap on some of this for the House so we have it very clear the role that the Minister for Housing and Public Works played in this progress. The Premier stated to the House that he had instructed his Attorney-General and Minister for Justice in relation to the delegations under the Right to Information Act and the Information Privacy Act. Accordingly, the letter from the Attorney-General states—
... I have sent letters to all Ministers advising them of your expectations ...

This is clear in the documentation that was tabled. So we know that the Minister for Housing and Public Works received a letter from the Premier detailing how he is to deal with RTIs. I now turn to a document that was received by my office, by my adviser. I table that letter for members of the House.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 2 August 2012, to the Office of the Leader of the Opposition from Manager, Right to Information and Privacy, Legal Services, Department of Housing and Public Works [[1556](#)].

Let us look at authority. This letter states—

In accordance with a Direction by the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Mr Martin Kennedy, Media Advisor, has made this decision under section 31 of the RTI Act.

What is section 31 of the RTI Act? Section 31 is 'Decision-maker for application to Minister'. It states—

An access application to a Minister may be dealt with by the person the Minister directs, either generally or in a particular case.

So who is responsible? The minister is clearly responsible. The minister made a direction under section 31 of the act for his staff to make decisions in relation to RTI applications in this House. This has not been clarified in the House and this is an issue that the minister needs to accept full responsibility for.

As I stated earlier, we have heard the remarkable words from the former senior media adviser today about whether or not that lobbyists register is accurate. I have issued the challenge to the Premier today, and that challenge is very clear: that he comes into this House by the close of business and he tables that document not only for the benefit of the members of this House but also for all Queenslanders. All Queenslanders need to be reassured today—not tomorrow, not in seven days time, not in 28 days time—that the lobbyists register maintained by each minister's office is true and is accurate. How can the Premier

ensure that it is a true and accurate record? He can ask every single minister sitting in this House today to sign the lobbyists register from the time when they took office. The Premier, as the leader of their party, can then come in here and table that as a true and accurate record. That is the task for the Premier today: to clarify this mess once and for all.

If there is any shred of doubt about the official statement that was tabled in that estimates committee by the Minister for Housing and Public Works—and the office of the Minister for Housing and Public Works tabled that, so he is responsible, not his staff, and he should take ministerial responsibility for it. We need to know that every other office is keeping a true and accurate record. It is up to the Premier to come into this House today and clear up this mess once and for all—not allow it to linger for weeks, as we have seen happening—so that all Queenslanders can be assured that the lobbyists register of each and every minister is a true and accurate record. I do not doubt that most of the ministers are doing the right thing. I do not doubt that. But let us put it on the public record. Let him come into this chamber and table it so that it is true and accurate, signed by each and every minister. The Premier needs to produce it not just for the members of this House but for all Queenslanders.

I now turn to the Minister for Science and Information Technology, Minister Ros Bates, in relation to our soap opera that we have been seeing each day. We have had the ‘missing in action’ arts minister making a return appearance and failing to clarify her complete role in relation to some of the issues that are before the Ethics Committee. Let us not forget that the minister has had every opportunity to pick up the phone and talk to the Premier and clarify any issues that are before the Ethics Committee. She has had that opportunity from day one and she has failed to do that. We are still seeing that the minister has not been fulsome in her explanations of what has been going on.

Then we have, of course, the Director-General of Transport and Main Roads, Mr Caltabiano. He is actually earning a lot for his nonappearance in this soap opera which is the Newman government—\$10,000 a week. Let us be very clear, he is earning \$10,000 a week while he is on leave from his role as the director-general of the Department of Transport and Main Roads. My calculations are that, by Thursday, it will be \$30,000—\$30,000 of taxpayers’ money for his nonappearance in this soap opera that is the Newman government.

Then we have the Premier, who obviously does not care, who could have sorted all of this out from day one. He could have taken leave from his office in the Executive Building and gone over to the transport minister’s office. He could have talked to the transport minister and the director-general. He could have gone and spoken to the arts minister, but of course none of this has happened.

Then how can we miss Mr Clive Palmer with his ongoing commentary in this daily soap opera? Of course, we know it is Clive Palmer and Bruce McIver versus Santo. We hear that Mr Palmer has called yet another press conference—I think it is actually happening at the moment—to talk about, I understand—and I am just quoting what I have heard—the fact that he is committed to the LNP but not to Newman, Seeney and Nicholls. This is becoming a joke. The way that this government is handling the issues is becoming an absolute joke. I am happy to quote some of the things that Mr Palmer has been saying. Let us put them into *Hansard*. He has said—

The books have been cooked by the biggest crooks that have ever occupied the state of Queensland.

If Mr Palmer has any evidence he should refer these matters to the CMC today. He has also said—

We have an action in the Supreme Court of Queensland against the Deputy Premier.

He’s stepped across the line of decency when he tried to use Government offices and officials to intimidate us, scare us and bully us.

I’m not going to be intimidated by someone like Seeney in any way.

When talking about Mr Seeney, Clive Palmer said to the AAP—

He has continued to bully and misuse his powers of public office and show contempt for the judicial process, I would have thought.

He also said—

I call for Jeff Seeney to resign immediately or the parliamentary members should consider his removal from office.

It gets better—

Tim Nicholls has lied to the people about the state of Queensland’s finances and he’s also a close friend of Santo Santoro who is subject to a current police investigation.

Mr Nicholls and his family have a long association with assisting Mr Santoro’s political campaigns and under these circumstances he should also be stepping aside.

I will be lodging a disciplinary complaint against the treasurer with the LNP tomorrow.

The soap opera continues and Queensland deserves better.

(Time expired)