




Speech by

Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard Thursday, 15 November 2012

MOUNT ISA, COMMUNITY SHADOW CABINET

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (6.06 pm): Members on this side of the House, unlike those opposite, are determined to focus on Queenslanders throughout the state, not just those within the confines of Brisbane and the south-east corner. We are determined to cover each area of the state to reconnect with Queenslanders, to listen to their concerns, to take those concerns on board and to assure Queenslanders that our team is here to take the fight up to this government.

That is why we have taken our shadow cabinet to Rockhampton and Cairns. That is why we have travelled west to Emerald, Barcardine and Longreach. That is why we have driven the Bruce Highway from Cairns to Bowen visiting all the places in between. And that is why last week we took the shadow cabinet to Mount Isa, one of the key economic centres of Queensland—not that people would understand that from the shameful and flippant manner in which the government has treated this great city.

In Mount Isa, our shadow police minister met with police officers, ambulance staff and firefighters. Our shadow health minister met with rural nurses and doctors. The deputy leader met with the local chamber of commerce and business representatives. The shadow Treasurer met with key representatives of the city's critical mining industry. The Mount Isa Mayor, Tony McGrady, pulled together a varied cross-section of the local community for a civic reception at which we were able to meet and speak with many people from all walks of Mount Isa life. I want to put on record my thanks to the Mayor, Mr McGrady, for hosting us there for that civic reception.

I also had the opportunity to spend some time at Spinifex State College where I spoke to the year 11 students for over an hour. I can say to the House that we have some great future leaders for tomorrow. These young men and women were very passionate and very committed about improving their local community. What reassured me was that, whilst a lot of them wanted to go and study elsewhere, they wanted to learn some skills and bring them back to the heart of Mount Isa.

Whilst I was also speaking with these young leaders, they mentioned to me their concern over the fact that the recreational camp at Magnetic Island had closed. They have undertaken leadership camps there for the last 20 years and they were talking to me about the high cost of now having to go to Brisbane. I would urge the government to reconsider that decision. It is going to have a huge impact on people out west.

In conclusion, I want to say that there is a lot of concern in the Mount Isa community about the fact that they completely missed out with the Royalties for the Regions program. When we are talking about Mount Isa, we are talking about a vast area that contributes to the economic prosperity of our great state. They contribute so much but they live so far away. We need to make sure we put money back into that community so they do not get neglected. The government needs to value the role that those Mount Isa residents play in our Queensland life.