




Speech By
Annastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Member for Redcliffe

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.13 am): Today I raise some extremely serious concerns about a matter that every member of this place could not help but be aware of, and that is the continuing scandal surrounding the member for Redcliffe. I place on record that today I have written to the Clerk of the Parliament asking that some clarification is placed on the record about the pecuniary interest register entry of the member for Redcliffe and that of his wife, Mrs Emma Driscoll. I also urge the member for Redcliffe today to make public both of these register entries as they stood at 8 am this morning.

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I advise you that if you have referred a matter—

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have not referred it yet, Madam Speaker. I will be doing so after—

Madam SPEAKER: I heard you say that you have written to the Clerk. So that matter has not yet been referred?

Ms PALASZCZUK: It has not been referred yet.

Madam SPEAKER: Okay.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We have heard today a very brief explanation from the member for Redcliffe, and it does not go to the root of all of the questions that need to be answered. Let me for a moment talk about the pecuniary interest register. We heard from the member for Redcliffe that he is going to correct the record, to correct the register, in relation to income received over \$500. I put it to this House that item 20 of the register of interests also needs to be corrected, and that is other interests. What do I mean by 'other interests'? Item 20 gives rise to any possibility of a conflict of interest. I submit that Mrs Driscoll has not declared a conflict of interest relating to receiving taxpayers' funds into her company.

The second matter relates to the declaration of motor vehicles. I have here a record of Mr Driscoll's entry in the pecuniary interest register and there is no motor vehicle listed. I also understand that some vehicles have been transferred. Those vehicles are neither listed on Mr Driscoll's register entry nor are they listed on Mrs Driscoll's register entry.

The next serious matter that I will write to the Clerk about is in relation to the phone lines to the electorate office, and this goes to the heart of the matters here. An electorate office is there for the electorate. It is not there to operate a business out of. The member has said that he wrote to the Clerk in relation to this matter when he insisted on putting in an additional phone line to the electorate office. What was the purpose of this additional phone line? Was the purpose of this additional phone line for the community group, as he maintains, or was it for, as reported in the *Courier-Mail*, the conduct of other business? If this was the case, this is a serious breach. It is a misuse of the electorate office and any member of this House would agree with me that this is not the purpose of a member's electorate office.

I would ask that the member for Redcliffe release the correspondence that he sent to the Clerk in this matter. I would also seek from the Clerk to not only investigate this matter in full, but also release any correspondence that may have been sent in response to the member for Redcliffe.

We have not seen a full explanation in this House today from the member for Redcliffe about the allegations that have been raised. They have been raised over a number of weeks not just by one journalist but by several journalists. It becomes scandalous when we hear revelation after revelation, allegation after allegation. Today was the prime opportunity for the member for Redcliffe to stand in this House and clearly put his case not to all the members of this House, but to the people of Queensland.

With that in mind, I have posed my own question time questions for the member. I will read out these questions now for the House and I expect that if the member for Redcliffe has nothing to hide, he will provide full and detailed answers by the close of business today. Will the member for Redcliffe explain his actions in relation to female workers who have since left his employ and made very serious allegations of sexual harassment? Why did the member for Redcliffe, as a so-called patron of the Regional Community Association Moreton Bay, have hands-on control of its books and finances? Why did the member for Redcliffe stack the organisation's board with his LNP mates and orchestrate the removal of any board member who was not politically aligned? Why did the organisation pay the wife of the member for Redcliffe almost \$120,000 in taxpayers' funds for what was referred to as 'media communication strategy and management'?

What did this work involve? Can the member for Redcliffe produce published media articles of what his wife was responsible for as a record of her achievements? Was this work actually carried out? Why was Norsefire, a company formerly registered to the member for Redcliffe and which is now owned by his wife since she became sole director about a month ago, paid \$2,600 in taxpayers' funds each week for what was referred to as 'secretariat management fees'? What did this work actually involve? Why did the member for Redcliffe's wife make inquiries about how to delete files from the organisation's computers once it became apparent the government was investigating its expenditure of \$1.6 million in government grants?

Why did the member for Redcliffe use his electorate office to continue his work with the Queensland Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association? Why did the member for Redcliffe insist just weeks ago that he has had no operational involvement with this group since he was elected in March 2012 when in fact the opposite appears to be true? Is it the fact that the member has made substantial benefit from the member operating the retailers group from his electorate office? In fact, \$350,000 was paid to her company for management services.

Also, has the Premier or the LNP undertaken further inquiries into the member for Redcliffe's activities in his former position with the Queensland Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association? Today the opposition has asked questions of the government about what audits they are undertaking, what investigations they are doing—whether they are being open and accountable and will release the details of those audits and investigations. Time and time again we have had the ministers bury their heads in the sand, deflect, cause diversions and not answer these serious questions. The member for Redcliffe's explanation today was unsatisfactory. It did not answer the questions; it merely raised more questions about what else has been omitted from his pecuniary interests register.

As a former chair of the Ethics Committee, I feel it is imperative that members keep their registers up to date—

Mr NICHOLLS: Madam Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I have been listening for some seven or eight minutes now to what the Leader of the Opposition has been saying. I seek your guidance in relation to standing order 234(1), which states—

Imputations of improper motives and all personal reflections on members shall be considered highly disorderly ...

If we have not heard imputations, unsubstantiated allegations—

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you, Treasurer. Take your seat.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, I have posed questions.

Madam SPEAKER: Treasurer, take your seat and Leader of the Opposition, take your seat. Standing order 234 requires the member offended to make the call in regard to the standing order. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr NICHOLLS: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They do not want to hear it.

Madam SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr NICHOLLS: I think if I might say this: when it says 'imputations of improper motives and all personal reflections on members shall be considered highly disorderly', that is one statement. It is then joined by the words 'a member shall not use unbecoming or offensive words in reference to another member of the House'. So in terms of the withdrawal—

Madam SPEAKER: Treasurer, please take your seat. I have heard your point of order.

Mr NICHOLLS: I have not quite finished making it, Madam Speaker, if I might—

Madam SPEAKER: With respect, please take your seat. I remind the House that, in respect of standing order 234, if members take offence to matters being raised they can move for those statements to be withdrawn under the standing orders. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Just as a point of clarification, I was merely raising questions—

Mr DRISCOLL: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, please take your seat. I call the member for Redcliffe.

Mr DRISCOLL: I certainly do find the comments about me as a member of this place to be highly offensive and lacking in fact.

Madam SPEAKER: And you are asking for them to be withdrawn under the standing order?

Mr DRISCOLL: I ask that they be withdrawn.

Madam SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition and ask that she withdraw under standing order 234.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I withdraw. For purposes of clarification to the Treasurer, I have merely been asking and raising questions that need to be answered.

Mr Cripps: And now you have withdrawn them.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, I have not. And I have commented very clearly about the importance of the register of this House for every single member. I have commented very clearly on what the member has stated today in this House.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You obviously do not like it. You obviously do not like what we are raising here today.

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members! Leader of the Opposition, resume your seat. Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. They obviously do not like it. They want to hide away from it. They want to move a diversion motion at 12 o'clock. Guess what? The people of Queensland want answers today. They want answers today. The letter I am writing to the Clerk is about the pecuniary interests register.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You have not listened. You do not understand. This is an issue that is dogging your government.

(Time expired)