




Speech By
Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Newman Government, Ministers

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.02 am): Today I want to talk about the bumbles of the Newman government, but before I get to some of the bumbles of the different ministers, I will talk at length about the answers that the Minister for Communities gave today in this House. Obviously, the minister does not care about the staff at the organisation. Whilst I acknowledge that services are being delivered, staff were very upset to learn late in the afternoon and later in the evening of Easter Thursday that they would not be getting paid. That is disgraceful, because in the weeks leading up to that the minister knew that issues had been raised, not only by the *Courier-Mail* but also by members in this House, about the community organisation of Moreton Bay. I am also very concerned that over that weekend the minister failed to come back from holidays to sort the issue out. When I called for a forensic audit of the organisation, the minister put out a press release. The minister is leaving the chamber. She does not want to hear it. She is not prepared to sit here and listen to the accusations. She is running away. She is leaving the chamber.

When I called for a forensic audit, in a press release the minister said, 'The fact is the government has already appointed an auditor.' I was just assuming, as I think everybody else in this House was assuming, that the Department of Communities was doing that audit. However, the member for South Brisbane asked whether today she would commit to undertaking a forensic audit. There was no answer to that specific question. Also today, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked a very important question about the expenditure of taxpayer funds to the community organisation. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked the minister whether Emma Driscoll was employed as the HR officer and Leesa Mills was employed as the IT officer. Those two people would have been in receipt of taxpayer funds. Were those positions advertised? Who was on the board that appointed people to those positions? How much money did they receive and how much money was received by Norsefire, the company that was formerly run by the member for Redcliffe and subsequently run by his wife? The people of Redcliffe deserve a strong voice. They deserve a member who is accountable and who is ready to explain issues that happen in the community.

Ms Trad: They deserve a government that listens.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is correct; they deserve a government that listens and a government that cares. A minister should have made inquiries as to the nature of the expenditure of public funds and immediately set about finding out why those issues were not being addressed.

I was prepared to meet with the workers. They told me of the distress they felt when they were not paid on Easter Thursday. They also told me about the distress they felt when a sign was placed on a mop bucket to tell the community that their services were no longer being delivered. They told me that staff from the Department of Communities did not come out to the organisation until the Thursday, which is in direct contradiction to what the minister said in this House today. The minister

needs to clarify when staff of the Department of Communities were on the ground in Redcliffe. She needs to explain when she or people from her office have sat down and spoken to the staff.

I feel for those staff members. One day they have a job, but on Easter Thursday, while many members of this House were enjoying time with our family and friends, they suffered the stress of not knowing whether they would be paid in the future; yes or no? It is not good enough for the Minister for Communities to wash her hands of this affair. The minister has had over two weeks to get across the entire details of this community organisation. If she cannot get across those details, she should move aside and let any one of a number of government backbenchers take over the job. Bring back David Gibson, the member for Gympie. Put him in a position to answer the questions of not only the people of Redcliffe but also the people of Queensland.

Government members and ministers have a very clear attitude that harks back to the Joh era. It is, 'Don't you worry about that!' We ask the questions and they say, 'Don't you worry about that; that's not important.' That brings me to the Minister for Transport and his recent bungles. Who can forget the botched bus review? How embarrassing for a Minister for Transport to—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! Members will cease interjecting. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: How embarrassing. It was not passed to Ipswich City Council; it was not passed to Logan City Council; it was not passed to Moreton Bay Regional Council. There was an uproar and local councillors were upset. I am quite sure there were a number of backbenchers who were very upset as well. We had the seniors coming out. The member for South Brisbane—

Mr Choat interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Ipswich West will cease interjecting.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I know that the member for South Brisbane had a lot of concerned residents in her community. We had over 200 people at a rally at Inala Plaza.

This is a minister who botched a bus review. Now we see that he is setting Queensland Rail passenger services up for either privatising or franchising as was done in Melbourne. Do not be fooled, it is not about bringing it closer in to government, it is about shedding staff and getting it ready to franchise.

When we talk about botches and bungles, how can we not talk about Michael Caltabiano? He was hand-picked by the Premier and sacked by the Premier. He was receiving \$10,000 a week. Then we have the botched Callinan review—that is one of my favourites—where the Attorney-General says, 'Don't you worry about that. We are going to commission the Callinan review to look at the CMC but'—guess what?—'you're not going to see the report because the CMC has concerns about some of the investigations that are happening and it may jeopardise future prosecutions.' Yet again, another botched review and no public report. We are still waiting to see the public report.

Ms Trad: It can't be made public; it's got operational matters in it.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right, member for South Brisbane. It contains operational matters.

Then we have another bungle by the Premier—the Cape York trial. We had the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs saying, 'No, we are not going ahead with it.' We had the Premier on radio saying, 'No, we are not going ahead with it.' They probably had a call from Canberra—from Tony Abbott perhaps—to say, 'No, you are going to keep the Cape York trial.' That was another botched, bungled review.

This government is incompetent. They cannot manage bus reviews. They cannot manage the Callinan review. We still have a secret Costello report out there. They cannot manage their backbench. What more can I say—'Don't you worry about that.'

(Time expired)