



Speech By  
**Annastacia Palaszczuk**

**MEMBER FOR INALA**

---

**MOTION: SALE OF PUBLIC ASSETS**

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.30 pm): I move—

That this House:

- notes reports that 55 state schools are on the Newman government's hit list to be sold and asks the minister to table the schools impacted throughout Queensland;
- notes that the Newman government has not received a mandate to sell schools or school ovals; and
- censures the Newman government for breaking its promise to Queenslanders by failing to gain a mandate from the people to sell schools.

Today this LNP government has brought down a blatantly obvious, ideological blueprint for privatisation and asset sales in this state. What was one of the first announcements before the Costello report was delivered in this House? That was, of course, about our state schools—the safe haven, home and critical place in the formative years for our children and our teenagers.

We know that the greed of this government knows no bounds. It is perhaps surpassed only by its heartlessness and its determination to treat Queenslanders in the most despicable way possible. It has utter disregard for the havoc that it wreaks. It has arrogant disregard for the pure and simple brutality it has already visited upon some 14,000 workers, upon countless charities and community groups and upon the community it has conned and continues to con each and every day. Now they have turned their sights on our children.

We know that the Newman government has drawn up a secret hit list of some 55 schools it is determined to close down. They just have not gotten around to telling the teachers and the students at those schools yet. In all likelihood they will not tell them until the 'for sale' signs go up because they certainly have no intention of consulting, but I will touch more on that matter in a moment.

We know that they are determined to carry out this plan just as they are determined to then erect the 'for sale' signs. They cannot cope with the fact that, although some of these schools have small enrolments, many of them are also located on prime real estate. They have dollar signs in their eyes and at the same time the rest of the country is focused on nurturing our schools and our children, not selling them out.

Where are these schools? For the benefit of those mums and dads, teachers and kids who are tonight worrying that their schools are about to be sold off, we can tell them what we know from the newspaper reports. We know that the targeted schools include 14 in Far North Queensland, 10 in North Queensland, eight on the north coast, eight in the Darling Downs and south-west, two in the south-east, seven in the metropolitan area and six in Central Queensland. They intend to sell these assets to pay for their education policies.

I have obtained a list of the enrolment data for schools throughout Queensland. The list of schools where there are 100 students or fewer numbers some 370 in total. Essentially, if this government goes down the path of this secret hit list of schools and sells them off, it means one in seven of the schools on this list will be sold. I am talking about schools in members' electorates including schools such as Keppel, Conondale, Eidsvold, Toowoomba South, Collinsville, Harrisville,

Marburg, Rathdowney, Fortitude Valley, Quilpie, Julia Creek, Broadwater, Maryvale, Springbrook, Mutdapilly. Release the secret list. Members opposite have the opportunity tonight to put at rest and at ease all of these schools on this list and their communities and be upfront with the people of Queensland and say which of the secret schools are on their hit list. Name them!

**Mr Seeney:** You can't even do it with a straight face.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Yes, I can. If the Deputy Premier wants to participate in this debate I would welcome him to stand up and try to defend his government's legacy. It will be written about for years to come. Members opposite care nothing about education. The only reform this government has announced which has any credibility is moving year 7 to high school, a former Labor government announcement. That is their legacy. They will not sign up to Gonski. I have the flu, but I am more than happy to shout over 74 people. They do not want to hear it because every one of them would have a school on this list.

**Mr Symes:** Not in Wynnum.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Yes, you would. This brings me to the education minister.

**Mr Symes** interjected.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** The member for Lytton and the member for South Brisbane will cease their debate across the chamber. I am listening to the debate and I do note there are interjections that the Leader of the Opposition is responding to and there are others that she is not. If the noise gets too high in regard to those whose interjections are not being taken, I will start warning members. But I also note that there are those interjections that are being accepted, and that is the distinction.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** This brings me now to the education minister. When the education minister was an opposition member he spoke on a matter of public interest on 11 November 2008. He stated—

We believe that all schools play a vital role in the education of the next generation of Queenslanders. We do not believe bigger is better. On the contrary, the bigger the school, the bigger the risk that students will not get the personal attention they need to succeed at school and, as a result, they will get left behind. The LNP is committed to keeping the school gates open and providing the support and resources our schools need to thrive.

That is exactly what the education minister said. They were his words.

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Here we go, I am so nervous! I will stand up to each and every one of them any day of this week. They should keep it coming, because they will get it back fairly and squarely. The then opposition leader then came out to my electorate and he was quoted as saying—I love quoting him—

We don't believe bigger schools are better ...

If elected, LNP will make sure schools remain open and are maintained.

They were his words.

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** If members opposite want to talk about how the worm has turned, it only applies to one person in this House and that is the Minister for Education. Over the time that the Labor government was in office, we built some 74 new schools.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** I appreciate that this is a political debate and there are heated arguments flowing back and forth, but the noise from the backbench immediately in front of me is so loud that I am having difficulty hearing the Leader of the Opposition and your interjections are not being accepted. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I want to end by mentioning the Fortitude Valley school. I would encourage the Premier and the education minister to go to the Fortitude Valley school and have a chat with the people there because I know that they are very, very concerned about the future of their school. It is a small school, but it is one of Brisbane's oldest schools. It traditionally has a small enrolment of children—this year it is about 55—but it is more than a school; it is a close-knit community. Many of its graduates have gone on to achieve extremely high results in their further education and the school has become a community hub. This is what schools are in our communities.

Tonight, all of the families with children who attend schools with enrolments of fewer than 100 are concerned. Why are you hiding your secret schools list from the public?

**Mr Langbroek:** What about Inala West and Richlands?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am more than happy to talk about Inala because that was part of State Schools of Tomorrow, about which there was consultation. I am on the public record about that. The money from those closures went directly into those neighbouring schools.

**Mr Langbroek:** What do you think we're doing?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We do not know what you are doing because everything is secret with this government. The minister should release his secret schools list tonight. It took 61 days for the government to release the Costello report. How many days is it going to take this Minister for Education to release his secret schools hit list? Tonight I challenge the education minister to stop hiding and stop being secretive. He should release the list and let everybody know what schools he wants to close down and sell off.