




Speech By
Annastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Commission of Audit

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.04 am): After 61 days of waiting, finally, the secret Costello report has been handed down. How long were government backbenchers given to consider this report? One day! How much does the cabinet trust its backbench on the secret Costello report? They were given one day to consider the recommendations of the secret Costello report.

Now that the report has been made public and that we have received the government's response to it, I can tell Queenslanders that the devil is in the detail. Today, we heard the Premier and the Treasurer gloss over what is largely about outsourcing and privatisation. This government intends to sell most government services, which means it will have nothing left to do. We hear the Treasurer talk about the government being an enabler. We know that this government has only one priority. It has only one infrastructure project on the cards. What is that infrastructure project?

Mr Mulherin: 1 William Street.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Exactly: the executive building at 1 William Street. Once they have sold off the services and once they have sold out the people of Queensland, what is the government going to do next?

Mr Crandon interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections across the chamber. I appreciate the topic may lead to heated debate, but we will have order. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: What will be left for government ministers to do? They will be sitting there in their brand-new luxurious offices overlooking the Brisbane River, with their feet up on the tables, hands behind their heads—

Mr Crandon interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Obviously, they do not like what I am saying.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Member for Coomera. I warn you under standing order 253A. I ask you to stop interjecting across the chamber. I appreciate there are comments across the chamber that people are responding to, but the noise level is too high.

Ms PALASZCZUK: This government, when in opposition, promised to seek a mandate if it was to sell assets. Clearly, what we have seen today is the fact that this government has sold assets without a government mandate.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, they have. Seven high-rise buildings in the CBD are assets. Fifty-five schools throughout Queensland are assets.

Mr LANGBROEK: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask you for a ruling under standing order 113(1)(b) about pre-empting debate. It has already been decided that that matter will be debated at 5.30.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am moving on, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition needs to consider anticipation of the debate tonight in any comments that she makes. I ask her to stay away from the topic.

Ms PALASZCZUK: This government has no intention whatsoever of seeking a mandate from the people of Queensland. Today we saw the Premier's inability to answer any question posed by the opposition about asset sales. Who gave him the answers? The Treasurer! The Treasurer was giving the Premier the answers. In his own words he said he is a soft touch. I agree with the Premier. We will continue to ask him the tough questions in this House. We will continue to condemn him for this so-called independent report and the government's response to it, because they do not have a mandate from the people. We will continue to make this an issue in the lead-up to the next election.

What did those opposite say about asset sales when they were in opposition? I am quite happy to go through that now. The now Premier said in November 2011—

I have actually no plans to sell any sort of government owned corporations or assets. If we do, I can tell you right now we will tell people prior to the election—we'll put it on the table.

Can anyone remember being told prior to the March 2012 election that seven CBD buildings were going to be sold—no, no, no. Nobody was told about the nursing homes going. No-one was told about the ElectraNet sale. No-one was told about the \$2.3 billion in QR shares going. You have misled the people of Queensland and today you have glossed over the detail.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You can laugh.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Deputy Speaker, there are 74 members trying to interject on me. I would like some order, please.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! If the Leader of the Opposition does not take interjections it is easier to protect her. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Now I would like to go through in a bit of detail what is actually in the government's response to the Commission of Audit final report so the people of Queensland can be very clear about what they are being conned about by this government. Recommendation 133 which relates to employees has been accepted. Every public servant needs to know this. It says that employees should no longer be appointed to a particular position in a particular agency; rather they should be engaged under the Public Service Act on the basis that their employment is with the Queensland government at a particular broad banded level.

A government member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is treating the workforce with complete and utter contempt. Let us move on to transport. I am going to read this out so the people of Queensland are very clear about what this government intends to do. Recommendation 15 states—

City passenger rail services and network infrastructure be opened up to contestability, like bus services, to allow different providers, including private providers, to bid to operate services and maintain below-rail assets in a particular franchised area under franchise and lease arrangements.

This will lead to higher prices for the public. Is there a mandate for the government to do this? No, there is absolutely no mandate from the Queensland public to do this. They also want to outsource. They can use outsource, they can use contestability, but, at the end of the day, it means sell, sell, sell.

Then the maintenance of the rail network and the safety of the rail network are to be outsourced—are to be sold off. How can we guarantee the safety of the public when they are travelling on our public rail network? But that is not all. At the moment pensioners receive a subsidy

when they travel with Queensland Rail. There is a review of the routes being undertaken. Does that mean the closure of the railway route from Brisbane to Charleville or from Townsville to Mount Isa? We know from the recommendations that the government is clearly looking at selling off the railway line from Mount Isa to Townsville with the port. That is the consideration.

Mrs Ostapovitch: How do you know?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Because it is in the recommendations if you care to have a look at them. At least I have had the opportunity to read them.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will direct her comments through the chair and the member for Stretton will cease interjecting.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let us move to health.

Mr Watts: Let's move to health!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, let us read about health. The recommendations state—

To achieve improved efficiency of public hospital services, the Government should progressively expand contestable markets— which means sale—

initially in metropolitan areas, for the private provision of:

- clinical services—which happens already with some elective surgery, but in greenfield hospital developments could go far wider.
- clinical support services such as pathology, radiology and pharmacy.

Sell, sell sell—public transport and health services.

Let us move onto disability services. Let us read into the record the recommendations about disability services so everybody is very clear. They state—

The Government continue to support and monitor the development of the non-government sector's governance capability as part of the move to market contestability in specialist disability services.

The government wants to sell off to someone else the services provided to people who need the highest care in this state. They will not be looked after in the government's hands.

Mr Davies interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Capalaba will cease interjecting.

Ms PALASZCZUK: This is a con. Today all the ministers have glossed over the details. They have glossed over the details. The Premier failed to answer any questions. The government has kept this under wraps for a long time. The backbench, all 74 of them, were only given one day to consider it. Let me be very clear: the people of Queensland will wake up to what it is. It is a sale. It is a sell-off. It is asset sales, pure and simple.

(Time expired)