




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR INALA

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Newman Government, Performance

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.05 am): Today the opposition raised very serious questions in this House in relation to fundamental breaches of promise that this government made to Queenslanders at the last election. I want to draw to the attention of the House the *Contract with Queensland* issued by the Premier, Campbell Newman. This contract with Queenslanders was very clear. It says at the top in very clear, bold letters: 'Please keep this contract so you can hold us to account'.

One of the main election promises of the LNP related to lowering the cost of living for families. Let me repeat that: lowering the cost of living for families. Householders are struggling to meet the cost of household bills. One issue that people right across Queensland—and specifically in my electorate—are talking about is the massive increase in electricity prices of 22.6 per cent. People are saying to me, 'How on earth are we going to make ends meet? How on earth are we going to pay the bills?' And these costs keep increasing.

Let me address the issue of what a contract is. A contract involves an offer and an acceptance. What we have clearly seen from this government is a breach of promise. That promise was contained in this document, which also very clearly says that 'if we do not perform, you can hold us to account at the next election'. That is what I want Queenslanders to think about today when the Treasurer hands down his second budget. This is not the first budget of the LNP government; this is the second budget of the LNP government. The blame game ends today. This is the time that the LNP government takes full responsibility for its decisions and its actions, because when the Treasurer delivers his budget at 2.30 today he will hit every Queenslanders where it hurts the most: in the pocket. By doing that, this government will have carried out one of its biggest betrayals—the latest in a long and continuing series of betrayals.

I say this to the millions of Queenslanders who were promised a decrease in the cost of living, only to be betrayed. When you open your electricity bill and note the massive increases, blame Campbell Newman. When you receive your insurance bills and are shocked by the spiralling premiums, blame Campbell Newman. When your rates notice arrives complete with an increase in the fire levy, blame Campbell Newman. Blame Campbell Newman for the increasing cost of living. Blame Campbell Newman for delivering little more than pain to families.

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I would ask you to refer to members by their appropriate title.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Blame the Premier for delivering a budget which breaks fundamental promises he made in the lead-up to the election. This is a man who looked Queenslanders in the eye and told them that he would reduce their electricity bills. He even named the price—a reduction of some \$330. I remind members what the member for Caloundra promised when he said—

The Government understands the cost of living pressures that Queensland households are under, and increases like this are just not acceptable. The Newman Government will ensure it is reduced to the lowest level possible.

And now the truth comes out that this government wants to avoid blame and avoid taking responsibility. As I said previously, this is the government's second budget—not the first budget when it sacked 14,000 public servants. This is a budget that will focus clearly on the cost-of-living increases that the Newman government is imposing on Queensland households right across this state. Did this government ever have any intention of following through on its lofty promises to reduce the cost of living? Did this government ever have the sincerity and the decency to deliver on its promises? Rightfully Queenslanders everywhere are asking these questions, because nothing this government has done over the past 14 months reflects what the Premier said he would do during the election campaign. History speaks for itself—

A government member interjected.

Mr Mulherin: The truth hurts.

Ms Trad: He's awake now!

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms PALASZCZUK: A cabinet minister is awake!

Mr Mulherin: Yeah; the truth hurts!

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take the interjection from the deputy leader: the truth hurts, and the truth is going to hurt Queenslanders today as they face the rising costs of living. Earlier today the Premier talked about the huge burden that would have been left to the government if it had not downsized the Public Service. Let us go back to that election campaign when the Premier said that the Public Service had nothing to fear. Well, the last budget was the first clear broken promise when we saw 14,000 jobs being shed, and now those 14,000 sacked workers will face the burden of paying higher costs of living. I can remember members standing up in this House talking about the cost of living and how they were going to reduce people's bills. So far we know that electricity is going up 22.6 per cent—the largest increase that Queenslanders have faced in seven years.

Mr Choat interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Your policy was to lower the cost of living. There is your contract. The member for Ipswich West should read that contract. That is the contract that every single LNP member made with their constituents. I say to Queenslanders today: send this government a message. Send it a message. People should phone their electorate offices and go to see their local member; make an appointment and tell them what you feel and what you think about how they have failed to address the cost of living. A new fire levy increase is going to be in this budget today. Not content with higher electricity prices and the fire levy, but insurance premiums are going up as well. How is this bringing down the cost of living? I cannot forget the water rebate—the water rebate that all of Queensland thought they were getting from this government but it was a one-off water rebate for South-East Queensland only. What about Rockhampton residents? Did they get the water rebate?

Mr Mulherin: What about Mackay?

Ms PALASZCZUK: What about Mackay residents? Did they get the water rebate? No! What about Cairns residents? Did they get the water rebate? No! Once again, broken election promises. Today the Treasurer will bring down a budget—the budget of broken promises—and every Queenslanders has a right to send this LNP government a message that it promised to lower the cost of living. In its first budget its cornerstone piece was the sacking of 14,000 public servants. Now the cornerstone of this budget is the rising cost of living that this government promised families that it would bring down. It has failed dismally and it should be totally and utterly ashamed. It does not care about Queensland. It does not care about people at all.

(Time expired)