




Speech By  
**Annastacia Palaszczuk**

**MEMBER FOR INALA**

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**MOTION: QUEENSLAND HEALTH, PAYROLL SYSTEM**

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.56 pm): I note the motion moved by the government today. It is very interesting that for the last two days an issue has engulfed this government—an issue perhaps of their own making—relating to the member for Redlands. That matter is now under investigation by the Clerk—

**Mr STEVENS:** I rise to a point of order, Madam Speaker. What relevance does this have to the motion?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is very relevant, because this is, once again, a diversion by this government from the issues that have been engulfing this government over the past two days with the revelations that have been brought forward about the member for Redlands.

**Mr Choat:** You are a disgrace.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is a diversionary tactic. We are used to diversionary tactics in this House—very used to it.

I take this opportunity to give the Minister for Health and the Deputy Premier a bit of an understanding about how an inquiry operates. Let us be very clear. When the inquiry was set up, the chair of that inquiry was entitled to access whatever documents it wanted. Everything and anything the inquiry wanted from me was granted to that inquiry—any cabinet document, any CBRC document, any briefing note. If the inquiry wanted the diaries of the former Premier, Anna Bligh, former minister Schwarten or former minister Lucas, the powers of the inquiry were at hand for them to be handed over for careful and clear examination.

I know that those opposite are new to governing in Queensland—and what a mess they have made! It has been shameful over the past 18 months. Let us make it clear for all members to understand: any document that Chesterman wanted for the inquiry was granted through me as the Leader of the Opposition.

Did he request the diaries? No. Did he request the lobbyist register? No. The inquiry has now ended. The inquiry has now ended and this government has a new scandal engulfing it and once again it thinks, 'Let's have a diversion. Let's play a diversion with trying to get some documents that Chesterman could have accessed of his own accord.' I have been told that everyone likes the expert legal advice of the Attorney-General. Everyone had the opportunity to get any advice they wanted, and they chose not to take it. We have heard from the Minister for Health going back in time and blaming Labor. Let us talk about the sacking of some 4½ thousand nurses, doctors and allied health professionals under your watch. These people are not going to be getting paid at all because they have been sacked. I have publicly acknowledged that the Health payroll was a debacle.

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No. I have publicly stated that on the record and I want to publicly state how much I support our nurses, our doctors and our allied health professionals. But as I travel around the state they are not talking to me about the Health payroll; they are talking to me about the actions of this government, and they are talking to me about the actions of the Premier, the Treasurer, the Deputy Premier and the health minister. If you walk into any hospital in Queensland, I can tell you that they are not saying anything favourable about the Minister for Health.

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They are petrified for their jobs.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I was out at the rally last night—proud to go out there and support the union movement.

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Proud to go out there!

**Mr Bleijie:** What an objective group, though!

**Madam SPEAKER:** I will remind the member I was on my feet. I know you were not paying attention, but there is too much noise in the chamber. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I was proud to go out there and support the workers of this state and I heard a health worker speak and what he told me was quite disturbing. He told me that some of the senior cardiac specialists had been sacked and that now only junior cardiac officers were in charge when people suffered a cardiac arrest. Minister for Health, do you accept that? Do you accept that these cuts are happening in our hospitals that are actually putting stress and strain on our hospitals?

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Mr Springborg:** What about the interstate Nurses Union delegates who were out there last night swelling the numbers to 400?

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! I know there are questions being asked across the chamber and responses being invited, but the noise is too loud to hear the debate. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Rather than this health minister engage with the unions—oh no, continue the union bashing! You want to keep belting them and belting them and belting them rather than working with them and talking about the concerns of outsourcing pathology, pharmacy and radiology in this state. Who is going to benefit, what LNP mates are going to get benefits, what are the conflicts of interest, who is attending these QForums that you are holding around the state, who is paying money—cash for access? You are going to change the laws soon so people will have to reveal less in relation to donations.

**Mr Newman:** Kevin Rudd is doing cash for access as we speak!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** So it is right for you to just continue doing it? We also heard today—actually, it happened late last night, and what a surprise that was—that the health minister has closed the Barrett Adolescent Centre in Wacol, in my own electorate.

**Mr Springborg:** It hasn't closed.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** He is going to be phasing it out. I asked the Minister for Health to come out there. He sat down and he listened to those personal stories of those young people who had either attempted suicide or were contemplating suicide.

**Mr Springborg:** Wasn't your government going to close it?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No. The previous government had decided to move it to another centre.

**Mr Springborg:** Oh, so from your electorate to another centre?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Yes, to another centre but keeping the model in existence.

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! Leader of the Opposition, I will ask you to take your seat. I appreciate that the Leader of the Opposition did take those interjections, but the debate is starting to stray from that which is before us and is not being directed through the chair. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. So the health minister has decided to close this centre and I hope he goes out there personally and explains to those hardworking men and women—not just from the health sector but also the education sector—about why he is—

**Mr Choat** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** I warn the member for Ipswich West.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Getting back to the substantive motion before us, I have explained very clearly that the inquiry had all of the powers to ask for any of those diaries relevant to the inquiry and also any of those lobbyist registers. Did I receive a request? No, I did not. The inquiry has now ended. We have now received the results of the inquiry. The opposition is going through those recommendations, but I do note that one of the recommendations is to outsource the payroll. Once again I would suggest to the Minister for Health that he treads very carefully here, because this is going to now happen on his watch. Is the minister going to guarantee that there are going to be no issues associated with going over to a new payroll? On that issue, I have been contacted by many people who are currently working at the Health payroll and they are very concerned about their jobs. So my next question is: how many jobs are going to go from payroll?

I note that the Premier professes to run an open and accountable government and he said that he would release his ministerial diaries. How are these diaries released? These diaries are not tabled in the Queensland parliament. My diary is tabled each month in the Queensland parliament. I ask the Premier today: will you ensure that all of your ministerial diaries, like the opposition leader's diary, are tabled in the Queensland parliament? I want a guarantee from the Premier of this state that he will be as open and accountable—

**Mr RICKUSS:** I rise to a point of order. Under standing order 246, I feel that the leader is just quarrelling; she is not actually debating the question.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Would you please take your seat.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr RICKUSS:** That is standing order 246.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am talking about the diaries. It says here—

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! Leader of the Opposition, I would ask you not to instruct the member for Lockyer on the standing orders. That is not upheld in respect of a debate here on this subject, but I will ask the Leader of the Opposition to address the motion. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I do have another question, and this is something that the opposition has been asking the health minister and his director-general, from my recollection, since not just the last estimates but the estimates before—that is, for a final breakdown of the \$1.2 billion. I want to know and Queenslanders want to know what part of that \$1.2 billion is the normal operating costs of a payroll. Have we received this information? We have been refused this information.

**Mr Springborg:** There is the \$800 million of extraordinary—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No. My challenge to the health minister today is to release the final detailed operating costs of the \$1.2 billion.

**Mr Springborg:** Go and have a look at it. If you can't read it's not my fault.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is what I am asking the health minister to do today. In conclusion, I want to make it very clear once again, just in case those opposite have not understood very clearly, why this motion is out of order. It is out of order because we have just had an inquiry for which Queenslanders have paid \$5 million.

It probably did not get the results that those opposite wanted, because we know from the very start that they wanted it to be a witch-hunt on the former Labor ministers. Yes, there were issues with

the payroll. Everybody acknowledges that. If we could turn back time and do it all again, would we? Yes, we would. But the issue is now what this government is going to do to ensure that it does not happen again. If it is going to be outsourcing, how many jobs are going and how many more jobs are going to go from Queensland Health? These are very legitimate questions yet questions that the government refuses time and time again to answer.

The inquiry had all of the powers to compel any production of any document and any document that I was requested to provide I provided to that inquiry. I put it to members today that this motion is clearly out of order. The inquiry has passed and they have failed the test.