




Speech By
Annastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 16 October 2013

**CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (PUBLIC INTEREST DECLARATIONS)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.38 pm): The opposition will be opposing this urgency motion. This is the third piece of legislation this week that the government has declared urgent. That is completely unacceptable. As I said yesterday, in this House we have a committee system and the right path for this bill is to go via that committee system. Yesterday the Attorney-General had every opportunity—every opportunity—to introduce this bill into the House and it could have gone through the committee system. There is no reason why, over the next week, it could not have gone to a committee, which could have then reported to the House. But once again we are seeing the arrogance of this government. The arrogant LNP government wants to do anything and everything with its massive majority. It has 74 seats in this House and is treating the people's House as its own political plaything.

Democracy is under direct attack. The opposition and the people of Queensland are frankly sick of it. The Attorney-General just stated that in this legislation he is bringing in a new detention regime. Stakeholders have once again not been allowed to comment on the major changes outlined by the Attorney in this bill. The explanatory notes state in relation to consultation—

Consultation occurred with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Queensland Treasury and Trade and the Department of Community Safety.

Once again, there has been no consultation with the Queensland Law Society, no consultation with the Bar Association and no consultation with the Chief Justice of Queensland. We note from what the Attorney just said that they are going to be asking for assessments from psychiatrists but there has been no consultation with the chief body that oversees and registers psychiatrists in Queensland. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists has not been consulted in relation to this bill.

Queenslanders can have no confidence in this bungling Attorney-General, and we have seen this time and time again. He cannot run a boot camp. The first boot camp he set up there were two escapes.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: For the super boot camp; we cannot wait to see that one. We are looking forward to that one.

There is absolutely no reason this legislation needs to be declared urgent. This is the third time this week that a bill has been declared urgent by this government. Once again, there has been no opportunity for the opposition or the crossbenchers to be briefed. There has been no call from the Attorney-General's office offering any briefing in relation to this legislation.

The provisions in this bill relating to the new detention regime have serious consequences that I do not think this Attorney-General understands. Once again this Attorney-General wants to be judge and jury. I understand that the Attorney-General may not remember the Fitzgerald inquiry, but I do.

An opposition member: No, he does. Joh's his hero.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Sorry, yes Joh is his hero.

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! If the opposition leader could take her seat there is a point of order.

Mr STEVENS: The motion clearly relates to the bill being declared an urgent bill. The Leader of the Opposition is wandering off down a trail to debate the bill. She needs to know that we need to focus on the urgency motion.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the opposition leader to stick to the urgency motion.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am saying that we are opposing the urgency motion because they are about to breach the separation of powers. That is something Joh Bjelke-Petersen could not explain to the public when he was the Premier.

Mr Mulherin: Nor could Russell Cooper.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Nor could Russell Cooper. It is obvious that this Attorney-General does not understand that because now he wants to be judge and jury. It is absolutely outrageous that the government is using its massive majority in this House once again to declare a bill urgent.

Mr Langbroek interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The bungling education minister over there can sit and shake his head as well when he is closing down schools and talking up independent state schools. Closing down schools is going to be your legacy, education minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you have a point of order?

Mr LANGBROEK: I draw your attention to the fact that the motion is not about education, although we could have a debate about education.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I again ask you to return to the urgency motion.

Ms PALASZCZUK: In summary—

Mr Stevens interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The member for Mermaid speaks. In all good conscience Queenslanders deserve better. These laws that are being rammed through this House deserve proper scrutiny. Time and time again we see the arrogance of this government. The power is going to their heads. They seek to do anything without the scrutiny of the committee system and without the scrutiny of the Queensland public. It is absolutely appalling. All LNP members should hang their heads in shame. I know that there are some lawyers amongst them. What does the former president of the Law Society say about these proposals? What has he said? He is the chair of the legal affairs committee. This government is failing to send this bill to his committee. They do not want it scrutinised at all.

It is about time this Attorney-General stepped aside and let someone with a legal mind who understands the separation of powers—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the opposition leader to stick to the urgency motion. I have now asked on three occasions. I do not intend to ask on a fourth occasion.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am talking to the urgency motion. Queenslanders deserve better. Queenslanders deserve to have bills go through the committee system and be scrutinised and consulted on.

Why has the Attorney-General failed to consult with the Law Society, to consult with the Bar Association, to consult with the Chief Justice of Queensland on this piece of legislation? The Premier should move this Attorney-General aside and put someone in there who has credibility with the legal profession, who will stand up for the legal profession, who will consult with the legal profession rather than ram laws through. This is the third time they have done this this week.

This is an absolute disgrace, members. It is an absolute disgrace for you to come into this House three times this week and introduce bills, bypass the committee system and declare the bills urgent. I have never seen this in my lifetime. You are bypassing a committee system that you agreed to. It was a bipartisan committee that clearly decided to have a committee system in Queensland

because Queensland did not have an upper house. What we are seeing is an absolute abuse of the democratic process.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You do not like hearing it do you, Deputy Premier? You should hang your head in shame. Did you not support the committee system?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members will speak through the chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Did you not support the committee system?

Mr Seeney: I set it up.

Ms PALASZCZUK: There we go! I will take that interjection. He said he set it up. Now you have totally disregarded it.

Mr Seeney: There were no committees.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let him stand up and speak in this House rather than debate me.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: In conclusion the opposition will be clearly voting against this motion. It is disgraceful. It is shameful. It is an abuse of power. It is an abuse of power to change fundamental legislation and implement a new detention regime without any consultation whatsoever. It flies in the face of democracy.

Today is a dark day for the Queensland parliament. It is a very dark day. This complete and utter embarrassment of an Attorney-General has brought in three urgent bills this week with absolutely no scrutiny and with absolutely no consultation. You should step aside and let another cabinet minister move into the position, someone who will bring the credibility to the position of the first law officer of this state that the position deserves. You are not fit to hold the office and you should stand aside and let somebody—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The opposition leader will speak through the chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: He should stand aside and let somebody take on that role if he fails to fulfil his duties as the first legal officer of this state.