




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 11 February 2014

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Redcliffe Electorate, By-election; 1 William Street

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.02 am): Whilst we are on the topic of Redcliffe, I am more than happy today to add a brief contribution about Redcliffe. This government had every opportunity to fill the vacancy created by Scott Driscoll. There is now an empty seat in this House. The new member for Redcliffe could have been taking their spot in the House today.

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

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, take your seat. I call the Leader of Government Business.

Mr STEVENS: Madam Speaker, earlier you ruled on the need to be exceedingly careful about matters in relation to Redcliffe in terms of the questions we received this morning. Now we have—

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of Government Business. I repeat my ruling of this morning which was that there is a broad-ranging motion before the House. I also remind members to take care and not anticipate debate on the motion before the House. I will not rule out members talking about the electorate of Redcliffe. I refer to my ruling on 19 June 2012 where I made reference to broad-ranging motions and the application of the anticipation rule. I remind the Leader of the Opposition of the same ruling I gave the government—that is, to be careful not to anticipate debate on the motion before the House. I will not rule out matters where members are just talking about the electorate of Redcliffe.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. We have seen the photograph of the face of the former member for Redcliffe, Scott Driscoll, taken down from the area where members enter this House.

There is also a lot of concern in the electorate of Redcliffe about the fact that there is only going to be a period of one week where people can cast postal votes and do prepoll votes. I have heard commentators across Queensland express concern about the fact that this is the shortest period in Queensland's history within which people have the opportunity to cast their vote. This has been reported by commentators across the state.

This House should have a voice for the people of Redcliffe. They should have a voice. This government has delayed and delayed. There was every opportunity for the new member for Redcliffe to be sworn in in this House today and to stand up and talk about the things that matter. But instead we have had an array of ministers talk about Redcliffe.

Have we heard much about Redcliffe in the past two years? Not much. I am prepared today to stand up and support the Labor candidate for Redcliffe, Yvette D'Ath—a hardworking, respected, well-known candidate who is out there doorknocking day in and day out, running mobile offices and being a voice for Redcliffe residents.

Scott Driscoll may no longer be in this House, but the ghost of Scott Driscoll remains. The ghost of Scott Driscoll remains around for the government for the rest of this term. The people of Redcliffe deserve better. They deserve better than a Premier who stood by that man for so long, a Premier who stood by and kept saying he had confidence in that former member.

In a few weeks time the people of Redcliffe will get to have their say. They will get to have their say on who can stand up in the seat of Redcliffe and represent them in this House, on who can be a strong local champion for the people of Redcliffe. It also gives the people of Redcliffe another opportunity. That opportunity, let me say, is very clear. This is an opportunity for the people of Redcliffe to send Campbell Newman and this arrogant LNP government a message—a message that they have gone too far, that they are not addressing cost-of-living issues, that they have broken promises and that they have let Queenslanders down.

Mr Johnson: You never broke any, Annastacia!

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right; I have not.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: In 13 days time the people of Redcliffe get to have their say.

Mr Hart interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They may all laugh and interject—and please member for Burleigh keep interjecting because there is a great candidate we have in Burleigh. There is a great Labor candidate who is out there campaigning and working hard. We have 11 new candidates out there working hard—doorknocking and running mobile offices. There are going to be a lot more candidates out there doing the hard yards, earning the trust of voters and calling this arrogant government to account.

This arrogant Premier rushes laws through without proper consultation. This arrogant Premier refuses to listen to the judiciary and the lawyers in this state. This know-it-all Attorney-General refuses to send the most controversial of laws through the committee system for proper scrutiny throughout this state.

The committee system was put in place for a fundamental reason. That was so people could offer their advice so we could get the laws right. What we have found over the last few months is that the laws introduced by this government have become unworkable. So how can you fix it? I am prepared to offer a solution as to how you can fix these laws.

The fundamental way we can get these laws working is to refer them to a committee and let Queenslanders have a say. Rather than attacking the lawyers in this state, how about you ask for their advice? How about something novel? Consultation—a word that the Newman government simply does not hear.

I now want to turn my attention to the 1 William Street building, the brand-new Executive Building this arrogant government is building for itself, for the Premier and its new ministers. The Auditor-General report clearly stated that this office building fiasco—the selling of seven government buildings in the CBD and the building of this brand-new office at 1 William Street—is now costing Queensland taxpayers in the order of \$2.3 billion. That is \$2.3 billion of Queensland taxpayers' money wasted by this government. Why? To benefit themselves—not to benefit Queenslanders out there living in the regions.

While I am talking about that, where are the buildings in the regions? Where are the new buildings and infrastructure plans happening in Cairns, in Townsville, in Mackay, in Rockhampton, in Gladstone? The only thing I am hearing about when I travel is the cuts—for example, the cuts to the James Cook University. The former Labor government put \$45 million into that dental clinic—\$45 million over four years—and now this government wants to cease the funding. This dental clinic is state of the art. Hundreds of people in North Queensland utilise the services of this clinic. But what has this government done? It wants to cut the funding.

I was in Gladstone and the people of Gladstone are concerned that this government wants to sell off their port. And who did the Premier put in charge of the ports authority up there? His hand-picked friend, his hand-picked mate—Brodie. That is who he put in charge so he can flog off the ports. The people of Gladstone are saying to me they want to keep their port in public hands. That is what the people of Gladstone are telling me.

What about Hervey Bay? Where's the member for Hervey Bay? Are you making representations to your health minister about the proposed planned closure of the ICU that we are hearing about? These are the rumours that are going around.

Mr SORENSEN: Madam Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence to that because even today the *Chronicle* has said it was a mistake.

Madam SPEAKER: You are asking for—

Mr SORENSEN: Withdrawal.

Madam SPEAKER:—withdrawal because you take offence. Leader of the Opposition, I ask you to withdraw.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I withdraw. But, most importantly, let's talk about this arrogant government not listening when it comes to cost-of-living pressures. Electricity bills are going through the roof. People are coming into my electorate office saying, 'How am I going to make ends meet?' As the member for Rockhampton has raised and the member for Mulgrave has raised in the media, families out there in regional areas are having their electricity disconnected because they cannot pay the bills.

This government needs to get a dose of reality—it needs to get out there and start doorknocking and listening to its constituency—because people out there are hurting. The Premier said clearly before that this is the year it all comes together. Well I say to the Premier: this is the year you need to fix up your mess, the mess created by this LNP government that is having a negative impact on Queensland. You are taking Queensland backwards. You do not have workable laws. You are spending money on yourselves. Frankly, people out there are not happy. If this government started listening to people out in the community, you might find you would have a better result. We will continue to rebuild the trust of the Queensland people and we will continue to fight every single day to keep this government, this arrogant government, accountable.

(Time expired)