




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 1 April 2014

MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Queensland Health, Employment Contracts

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.01 am): Today we again saw the health minister running for cover. He is not prepared to answer detailed questions from the opposition about the doctors crisis engulfing the state. In fact, the hypocrisy of the government was that they actually dared to say that it was the opposition that was creating this chaos, when nothing is further from the truth. This is a crisis of the health minister's own making that has been ongoing for over 150 days. The government could have solved this problem at any time. The health minister's lack of leadership and failure to take responsibility for what is happening in the health system beggars belief.

One clear question that I put to the health minister today was how long it would take for the paediatric intensive care physician to be replaced in Townsville, and we heard the government say that the former Labor government did not support this. I have very clear evidence that the Bligh government was going to deliver the paediatric intensive care unit in Townsville, and I table this statement because it shows that this health minister may have misled the House.

Tabled paper: Media release, undated, titled 'Bligh Government to deliver PICU for Townsville' [4814].

This is a very serious allegation, and once again they are not taking it seriously at all.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The member for Mundingburra will not listen, but I am glad that he is here because a poll was commissioned in his electorate about this health crisis, so let us see what the poll had to say.

Ms Trad: What did it say?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The poll asked the question—

Thinking about the Queensland public health system, do you believe that it has gotten better over the last two years, or gotten worse over the last two years, or stayed about the same?

In the seat of Mundingburra the response was: better, 15.3 per cent; worse, 55.6 per cent. But let us go further. Question 4 said—

The Queensland State government is trying to force doctors in our hospitals on to individual work contracts, saying it is more efficient. The doctors say these contracts would be dangerous and that if they're introduced they will be forced to leave our public hospitals.

Do you support the government forcing doctors on to individual contracts?

Support for the government in the seat of Mundingburra, 15 per cent; opposed, 68.4 per cent. These polls are also reflected in the seat of Ashgrove, where 62.1 per cent did not support the government forcing doctors on to individual contracts. The member for Cairns is over there, so let us see what they are saying in Cairns. In Cairns 15.3 per cent supported the government forcing doctors on to individual contracts while 74.6 per cent were opposed. These polls are pretty telling about whether or not Queenslanders support this government's action on forcing doctors on to individual contracts. The

member for Ipswich West is sitting here in the chamber. In his electorate 65.9 per cent opposed this government's move to force doctors on to individual contracts and only 15 per cent supported it. These polls reflect what Queenslanders are thinking, and this government is refusing to listen to them. But we will move on.

Today the member for Mulgrave asked very clearly about the board's contingency plans for mass doctor resignations and whether or not the minister would reveal these contingency plans because the chair has refused. What did the minister say? He said nothing. What are the contingency plans? This is clearly a crisis in our public health system which is of the government's own making. They are refusing to listen to Queenslanders, and we only have to go back to the Redcliffe by-election where the Premier said that he will listen to Queenslanders. Do we see any evidence of this government and this Premier listening to Queenslanders? Absolutely not!

I would have thought that over the last week the members here—including the members for Mundingburra, Cairns and Ipswich West—would have been out there speaking to their constituents. People have been phoning and writing to my office about this health issue, and they want to know what the government is doing to fix this mess. Another question that was clearly put to the Premier today about resolving the crisis was, 'Will you amend the Industrial Relations Act?' The Premier categorically said 'No.' Interest groups and the doctors want that act to be amended, and this government is obviously failing to listen. They do not like to hear it, but if they will not listen in this place and they will not listen to their constituents, then maybe they will listen at the next election because maybe then they will hear the message loud and clear, 'You have taken Queensland backwards!' We only have to look at the track record of this government over the last two years. Before the election, the Premier said that the Public Service had nothing to fear.

I refer to an article that has just appeared on the *Courier-Mail* website that the Public Service Commission workforce profile shows that the public sector has shrunk by 15,414 people since the LNP won power in Queensland, and that is a disgrace.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is a disgrace. Let me further add that the article states—

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Those opposite do not want to hear it, but people out there are not happy. It states—

Although the cuts have slowed, another 761 people were axed in the December quarter—

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Acting Speaker, I am sorry, but I do not want to shout.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Those on my right will cease interjecting.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would actually like to deliver my MPI in peace.

Government members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition has the call. Members will cease interjecting.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They can laugh now, because they will not be laughing after the next election. The article states—

Although the cuts have slowed, another 761 people were axed in the December quarter—or just over nine a day.

Nine people a day are losing their jobs under this government. It is absolutely disgraceful and those opposite should hang their heads in shame.

Before closing, I want to talk about this government's track record. Let us talk about it and let us be open and let us be frank about it. It sacked workers. It is at war with the doctors. It is at war with the judiciary. It is at war with unions. It is at war with firefighters. It is at war with ambulance officers. When will this government grow up and realise that when you are elected to be a government of the day you are to govern in the best interests of this state and you are to govern in the best interests of all of the people right across Queensland? You are becoming a national embarrassment. This LNP government is a national embarrassment. You are becoming a laughing-stock right throughout Australia. You are picking fights left, right and centre. You are picking fights with yourselves. When is it going to end? The only way it can end is to get rid of this Premier. The only way it can end is to get rid of this Premier, get some decency back in government and let us get Queensland back to its rightful place where people are valued, where there is dignity and where people's jobs are valued as well.