




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszcuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 2 April 2014

MOTION: ESTIMATES HEARINGS

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.35 pm): I have glanced at this motion. Can I say from the outset that the opposition completely and utterly rejects any change to the estimates committee process that we have had in this state for many, many years. This is a government that is running scared. This is a government that does not want openness and accountability because we know that this is an election year.

This is a substantial change and they did not even have the decency to give me a phone call to discuss this issue. I would be very surprised if the Palmer party was consulted, if the Katter party was consulted, if the member for Nicklin was consulted or if the member for Gladstone was consulted. They are indicating to me that they were not consulted. This is a shameful disgrace. The Deputy Premier should hang his head in shame.

Mr Seeney: You don't want to do the work, do you? You don't want to turn up for two days.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We enjoy estimates. It is my favourite time of the year. I enjoy coming to your hearing, the Attorney-General's hearing and the education minister's hearing. This year there are fundamental questions that need to be asked. What this government is doing is condensing that process from seven days to two days.

I have actually done a bit of research. We had estimates sit for seven days in 2013 and seven days in 2012. What shameful episodes they were from the government. They were not on top of their portfolios and we exposed crises in their departments. We can remember the efforts of the member for Mudgeeraba when she was a minister. Who else was there? The member for Moggill was the minister for housing at the time. Who can forget the director-general of the transport department, Mr Michael Caltabiano. For the last two years we have had the great opportunity to ask the Deputy Premier questions about taxpayer funded charter flights to and from his electorate. We will ask them again.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes we will. You are not prepared.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You are never ready.

Mr Seeney: You can ask me twice.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Their arrogance. I go back to the estimates hearings in 2010 which went for seven days; 2009, seven days; 2008, seven days; 2006, seven days; 2005, seven days. We know why they do not like estimates. It is because they were a Tony Fitzgerald recommendation. That is why they do not like estimates hearings and that is why they want to curtail them. What did Tony Fitzgerald say? He recommended Queensland introduce 'a comprehensive system of parliamentary committees to enhance the ability of parliament to monitor the efficiency of government'. Well we know the government are not efficient and we know they cannot govern. But you cannot deny the

right of the opposition and the crossbenches to ask fundamental questions of this incompetent government during an estimates process. It is an absolute disgrace. For the Leader of the House to come in here and say it is a trial, well we reject the trial. We reject having to come here just for two days when we want a full seven days of scrutiny.

Also, too, I think they want to hide from not only public scrutiny, not only opposition scrutiny, but also media scrutiny because we know that every single night it has been a catastrophe on the news because these ministers are not across their portfolios. But the biggest question for Queenslanders is why the change now? Why don't they want to have seven days of full scrutiny? Do members know why? Because it is an election year. They have less than 12 months to go and it is not going very well. We also know that they are arrogant. They are an arrogant government that are coming in here today and they will use their massive numbers—74 in this House—to shut down debate and also to rush this motion through, curtailing the democratic right to fundamentally question—

Government members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! There is too much interjection.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—the democratic right of an opposition to fundamentally question this government.

Mr Seeney: You've got twice the time.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have had no guarantees from these ministers that they will sit there for the full two days. Will the Deputy Premier be there for the full two days? I doubt it. Will the Minister for Education sit there for the full two days? I doubt it. No minister will sit there for the full two days because they have not even had the guts to raise these issues.

I can only conclude that they are a bunch of chickens afraid to face the music. We know that they can use their powers and their numbers in this House to sack the PCMC. Now, what they are doing is once again trashing democracy in this state. Every Queenslander should know, every Queenslander should be aware, what the government is all about. They do not want the scrutiny. They do not want the questioning. They want to control the CMC. They sacked the PCMC. They do not want questions because they do not like them. They are an absolute disgrace in this House. They cannot answer any questions put to them from this opposition in any detail. They will talk about anything else that they want but they will not answer the tough questions. Now, they are thinking, 'We'll run all these committees concurrently so we won't get any media scrutiny. We can pack up in two days and go on our overseas holidays.' That is exactly what this motion is about.

Mr Seeney: We're going to have an extra week of parliament.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You can dress it up any way. The opposition is strongly opposed to this new so-called trial. We reject it outright. You are actually denigrating a Tony Fitzgerald reform. These estimates hearings have been in place in this format. It is a convention of this House which you have trampled on today and you are using your numbers to trample over democracy.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The member will speak through the chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Acting Speaker, we reject this totally and utterly. It is wrong and it is a disgrace.