




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Newman Government, Performance

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.00 am): Under the Westminster system of democracy, we have a convention called ministerial responsibility—something that this government knows absolutely nothing about.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Just pause the clock. Sorry, Leader of the Opposition, for interrupting you. I am going to warn the Attorney-General under standing order 253A for interjecting as he was moving across the chamber. I ask other members who are leaving the chamber to please do so quietly.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is called ministerial responsibility—something that this health minister knows absolutely nothing about. What has been revealed today in question time is the complete incompetence of the Minister for Health. What has been revealed in this House today is the truth and that is that, back on 24 October 2012, this LNP government signed a contract to expand the state-wide MetaVision service—something that the minister failed to even know about today. He was completely caught unaware and off guard.

There is a crisis out there and that crisis has happened directly under the watch of the Minister for Health. We now know that it was this government that signed off on the rollout of MetaVision. Then we find out very clearly that problems started to arise in July 2013. In July 2013, a brief was prepared and submitted to the executive director of RBWH about issues presenting risk to patient safety.

That was very clearly my question today to the Premier: what is the risk to patient safety and why will the Premier not release the secret briefing note that was prepared and submitted to the executive director in July 2013 when this issue was first raised? We know that in that same month, July 2013, this health minister met with the chair of the Metro North HHS. What was discussed? Was it ever raised with the minister at this meeting or any subsequent meeting that there was a problem that was identified and that there were concerns to patient safety? That is a fundamental question.

What has been revealed today is that this government will not answer questions put to it by the opposition, questions that the people of Queensland want answers to. So here we are, some 14 months later, in October 2014, and we ask the minister when did he first become aware of this? When did he first become aware of it? There was the signing of the contract in October 2012. Problems were identified in July 2013. There were meetings with the chair of the health board. But when did the minister become aware of it? Over the weekend!

This is a government that is not transparent. This is a government that is not accountable. Otherwise this minister would do his job and he would know the answers to these questions. For him to come in here today and not have the answers and not know the full details does not put any faith that this minister is capable of carrying out any duties given to him by the Premier.

The member for Bundamba and the member for South Brisbane followed up with a series of questions, which were very simple questions about whether the patients have been alerted that there could have been issues. Once again, there was no follow-up. This government is hiding from the truth. This government is not giving the people of Queensland and the patients the due care and consideration that they fundamentally deserve.

What is this government doing now to rectify the situation? Queenslanders are still kept in the dark. Is anyone concerned that this is happening under the minister's watch? All Queenslanders should be concerned that this is happening under the minister's watch because, under the minister's watch, we have seen over 4,700 jobs axed from Queensland Health. Under this incompetent minister's watch, 4,700 people have lost their jobs. What else has happened under this minister's watch? We had the doctors crisis. This minister is incompetent, he should not be holding the title of minister of the Crown and this Premier should be axing him as soon as possible.

Today, during question time we heard the Minister for Health talk about harmony. We know that in the state of Queensland over the past 2½ years there has been nothing to do with harmony. We have seen fight after fight. This government has fought with every known Queenslanders possible. From the doctors, to the lawyers, to the judges, to the teachers, to the firefighters, to the ambulance officers, no-one is safe under this government. It has picked fights with many. But now we find out that things are not so harmonious in the LNP. Not content with picking fights with Queenslanders, the LNP members have now turned on themselves and are picking fights with each other. Over the past three weeks the LNP has been tearing itself apart. The preselection battles have become a public spectacle for all Queenslanders to see.

Queenslanders deserve better. They deserve a government that is governing for all of them, not consumed with themselves. It needs to be focused on Queensland now and into the future. Unfortunately, this is a government in turmoil. We have seen the debacle over the member for Moggill. We have seen controversy around the member for Redlands.

Yesterday, I was very pleased to join my colleague the member for Stafford, Dr Anthony Lynham, down at the Redlands for the launch of our Labor candidate, Deb Kellie, for the seat of Redlands. Deb is a candidate who the people of Redlands would be proud of. She is a barrister. She has lived in the area for many years with her husband. She is passionate about the area and fights each and every day to make sure that the people of Redland have their voices heard.

Over the past 2½ years Queenslanders have been let down by this Newman government. Time and time again it has let them down. Now, five months out from the election, we see a massive waste of taxpayers' money going on political advertising. Make no mistake: over the next few months that advertising buy will increase. People from all around the state are stopping me to tell me that they are sick and tired of the waste of taxpayers' funds. They are sick and tired of the full-page ads, the radio ads, the television ads where this government is trying to portray an asset sale as merely a lease. But we know that it is all spin and we know that Queenslanders can see right through this.

Recently in Bundaberg I sat on a back deck with some residents. We talked about political advertising and the asset sales agenda of this government. They said to me, 'Annastacia, we get it. We know exactly what they are on about here. Why is this money going into advertising when the money could be going into flood mitigation works in Bundaberg?' That is how much this government cares about the people of Bundaberg and the horrific floods that they went through. The residents want to make sure that they are safe and secure and can live fulfilling lives in their community. Why is this government wasting money on political advertising when this money could be directed to front-line services? This money could be going towards putting on more nurses, paramedics and ambulance officers. We know some \$20 million has already been spent. How much more will be spent? The ads are coming thick and fast. The latest are ads about the G20 cultural celebrations. We are hearing that those cultural celebrations could be in the vicinity of some \$10 million, when this government has cut arts funding to organisations right across the state.

What we have seen this morning from the Minister for Health is nothing but a sign of disrespect for people in our hospitals right across the state. Queenslanders deserve more. Queenslanders deserve to know why this bungle happened under this health minister's watch. Why did he only know about it on the weekend when the contract was signed in October 2012 and when it was highlighted to him in July 2013? Why did the minister do nothing? If this minister was a competent minister he would be across these issues. This should be a wake-up call for him. He should now understand that this is a central issue, an issue that Queenslanders want answers on. There should be no more putting his head in the sand. Queenslanders deserve answers and they deserve those answers today.