



Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszcuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 25 November 2014

MOTION

Newman Government, Performance



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.30 pm): I move—

That this House:

- notes the Newman government has made substantial cuts to government jobs and services since the March 2012 election;
- acknowledges that these cuts have had significant detrimental impacts on Queensland's social fabric, and state and regional economies;
- notes that the LNP's Contract with Queensland, which is signed by the Premier himself, states that if the LNP does not perform Queenslanders can 'hold us to account at the next election';
- further notes that Premier Newman told his cabinet members, in relation to ministerial responsibility, that 'If they don't sort out problems within two years, at that stage it's not the Labor Party's fault. It's their fault'; and
- condemns the Newman government for failing to deliver during its term in office.

Where do we begin? The past 2½ years have been a great disappointment. This government was elected on a number of promises, but over the past 2½ years all we have seen are broken promises. This government promised to govern with humility, grace and dignity and, instead, we have seen nothing but arrogance and contempt. Over the past 2½ years this government picked fights with everyone, including itself. In the lead-up to the election no-one will forget—even though this government wants people to forget—the fights with the doctors, the lawyers, the teachers, the firefighters and the list goes on and on and on. When they had no-one else to fight with, they turned on themselves. They started fighting with themselves about who would get what seat and who would be thrown out. There are continual divisions between the LNP state headquarters and branch members on the ground. This has been an embarrassment to Queensland. As people have quite rightly said in the past, if the LNP cannot govern itself it definitely cannot govern Queensland.

Over the past 2½ years, newspaper article after newspaper article has described the legacy that is the Newman government's train wreck. Let us go through some of the more interesting headlines: '4,000 more face sack'; 'Razor gang sets sight on health'; 'Job cuts will gut regions'. That was from the *Toowoomba Chronicle*. 'Newman razor gang cuts heart of Downs'; 'Cuts will bring economy to the knees'; 'Families to suffer as health services axed'. That was from the *Townsville Bulletin*. From the Sunshine Coast we have 'Newman bumps women's health funding'.

A government member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I hear an interjection, 'Who cares?' I can tell the member that Queenslanders care and people in her electorate care. They know that this government and its members are failing to listen. I know that in her electorate especially they are not listening to her.

I will continue with the headlines. The *Warwick Daily News* has, 'TAFE in the firing line: task force recommends closure of 38,000 campuses across Queensland'. From the *Australian*, 'Newman braces for job cuts backlash'. The *Sunday Mail* has, 'Axe falls on women's health service'; 'Cuts hit military graves: critics take up fight in battle over war history'. Who can forget this one from the *Townsville Bulletin*: 'Pensioners battle as concessions canned'. It was a gift of the Newman government to cut concessions to the hardest working people, the pensioners.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They do not like it. They had to back-pedal on that one. I will keep going. This is just a taste of what is to come: 'Newman job cuts hit state of slump'. I am glad the Treasurer is here because this is one of my favourites and it is from the *Courier-Mail*: 'Cut to the core'. That is one of the favourites because that is what this government has done: it has cut, it has cut, it has cut. From the *Courier-Mail*, 'Shock as LNP government winds up iconic state-wide cancer service BreastScreen'. That is a mere selection of the stories about the damage that this government has done right across the state over the past 2½ years.

I could go on, endlessly. The Premier's literary awards were axed; \$100,000 was axed from the Pyjama Foundation for its Pyjama Angels program that mentored foster children; and \$20,000 was cut from Volunteers for Isolated Students' Education, which provides assistance for families and students in rural Queensland. The government cut funding that the Heart Foundation provided to walking groups through a program that was aimed at keeping the elderly healthy and out of hospital. Who can forget the cuts to the travelling show school, which was one of the first cuts this government made? I remember that from the first year of this government's term. More recently, \$900,000 was cut from suicide prevention initiatives. Nearly \$500,000 has been cut from family planning initiatives in north Brisbane alone. A sum of \$1.9 million has been cut from the PCYCs, which are there to help young people and kids be active and stay off the streets. I have already mentioned the \$44 million cuts to the BreastScreen Queensland service.

Queenslanders have a right to feel utterly betrayed, because this is not the government they were promised. We have had three years of betrayal and three years of cut after cut after cut. That is what we have received from the LNP government. Within months of taking office, they talked about cutting 14,000 people from our workforce. However, we now know that that number is closer to 24,000—that is, 24,000 families cannot pay their bills and cannot pay their mortgages, because of this arrogant Newman government. Cut, cut, cut. The Premier and the Prime Minister are cut from the same cloth. They say one thing before an election campaign and they do the complete opposite when they gain power. Neither the Abbott nor Newman governments can be trusted.

How can we go beyond the Contract with Queensland? One of its core pledges was to restore accountability in government. Everyone is shaking their heads at that one. We all know the 'little mermaid', the member for Mermaid Beach, stands to benefit from the \$100 million skyride if it gets up. He is the '\$1 million Mermaid Beach man'. They said they would revitalise front-line services for families, but the health system is crumbling under this government.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Obviously they are not out there listening, because that is what families are telling me. They tell me they cannot get into hospitals. The nurses are telling me that they are overworked. It is a dire situation. How can we forget the appointment of their mates, such as Michael Caltabiano? We have had a series of issues with the member for Mudgeeraba, the member for Redlands and the member for Moggill, who has been in the headlines lately for all the wrong reasons, not for the right ones. The branch members want him. They love him. It is a pity that the LNP hierarchy does not.

The past three years have been a complete disappointment. Who can forget the government's broken promises on the cost of living? This government promised to lower the cost of living, but it has not been able to fulfil its promise to families of \$120 a year in relation to electricity. We know what this Treasurer has planned. We have seen it on his Christmas card. He wants to sell off the assets and pocket the cash, even though Queenslanders do not want that. Thank you very much, Tim, for that Christmas card! All I see is more political advertising. Has anyone else received a Christmas card yet? It is more political advertising. He is like the Grinch who stole Christmas. It would be more apt to say that he is the Grinch who sold Christmas.

There are less than four months until Queenslanders go to the polls—that is, in less than four months they will cast their vote on whether or not they believe that this government has led them down the garden path and not delivered. We have heard nothing but broken promises. It has cut jobs and services, and Queenslanders deserve better.