




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszcuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 25 November 2014

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Government Advertising; Newman Government, Performance

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (12.19 pm): Today, I want to touch on something that is very close to my heart and I think very close to the hearts of some of the other members of this House, which is the fundamental issue of integrity and accountability in government. Time and time again we have asked this government to reveal the amount of money that mums and dads are paying towards blatant political advertising. In the lead-up to the March 2015 election—fewer than four months away—households are being bombarded with endless amounts of political advertising. Clearly, when it comes to advertising there is a code of conduct. That code of conduct says that there must be no political advertising six months out from the election campaign. I have written to the Auditor-General about this matter. I believe that it is a misuse of public money to be blatantly advertising within the excluded time frame for political advertising and it must stop. The ads must stop and they must stop today. Every time a family is sitting at home and they see these ads come on their television screens, every time they hear these ads being played on the radio, they must know that Campbell Newman is spending their hard-earned money trying to get the LNP re-elected at the next election. Who should be paying for these ads? The LNP should be paying for these ads, not the taxpayers. It is about time there were some high standards in this government, which this Premier said that he would live up to when he was elected over 2½ years ago.

We have seen a diminution of standards in this House and within this government. There is no clearer example of that lowering of standards than the actions of the member for Mermaid Beach. The member for Mermaid Beach has an interest in a proposal that this government is going to consider in the near future. That project is Skyride on the Gold Coast. If it is good enough for the member for Mudgeeraba to table the two pages of advice that she received from the Integrity Commissioner, why is it not good enough for this man over here to table the advice from the Integrity Commissioner? That man is the member for Mermaid Beach, who asked questions of the Integrity Commissioner. How do we know the questions he asked? He is an assistant minister in this government and there is clearly a conflict of interest. If there is no conflict of interest, he should show us the advice. The Premier has said that he has sighted the advice. That is not good enough for me and that is not good enough for Queenslanders. We want to see that advice and we want to see it today.

The question that the member for Stafford asked the Premier was very clear: how much money has been given? How much secret money has been given in relation to the development of the Galilee Basin? What a simple, fundamental question going to the heart of the integrity of this government. We heard the Premier say 'somewhere between \$100 million and \$300 million'. Queenslanders want to know how much money is being given and they want to know it today. The Premier also said in an answer to a question, 'Well, when we know, we will tell you.' So do they know or do they not know? Has the deal been done or has the deal not been done? This issue goes to the heart of how a government runs. Queenslanders deserve to know the answers to these questions.

As I look back over the past 2½ years and as this could be the last parliamentary session before a general election, I want to thank my Labor opposition team for holding this government to account each and every day we sit in this place. When we entered those doors after the last general election, we came in here and took our seats proudly to serve as honourable members on behalf of our constituents who elected us. For the past 2½ years we have lived and breathed the results of that election. We have listened to Queenslanders. What did Queenslanders tell us after the last election? It was a very clear message: Queenslanders do not want their assets sold. That is exactly what Queenslanders told the Labor Party and that is exactly what we have listened to the people of Queensland about. Now, we see a dramatic turnaround from that mob over there, who are not listening and are going down the path of asset sales. They can dress it up as leases—they can dress it up any way they want—but Queenslanders are smarter than they think they are. They know exactly what they are on about. They know that a lease is a sale no matter what they say, no matter how they say it and no matter how much they spend on saying it.

Over the past 2½ years I have travelled the length and breadth of Queensland. I have listened to Queenslanders from all parts of this state who have told me that this government is arrogant and that this government is simply not listening. I have heard the cries of people, of families who are telling me that their health system has been gutted by this LNP. There have been 4½ thousand jobs ripped out of our health system, yet they put ads on TV trying to guarantee things that we know they cannot be held to account for.

Last week I was at the graduation ceremony for Inala State High School—the school that Wayne Goss went to, which I mentioned earlier. When I have been to past graduation ceremonies, as the kids walk across the stage there is a sign that says what they want to do when they leave school. Usually, it is things like electrician, or go to university, or become a mechanic, or work in retail, or be a hairdresser. When I sat there and I looked at the board during that graduation ceremony, as the students walked past on the stage what did the sign say that those kids wanted to do? It said that those kids wanted to get a job. For goodness' sake, what has Queensland become under the LNP? It has taken Queensland backwards. Kids leaving high school do not even have the enthusiasm or ambition to achieve what they deserve to achieve. This government is pushing them down. It is saying, 'You just need to get out there and try to find whatever job you can get.' It has dismantled the TAFE system in this state and axed jobs.

The other day I was in Townsville and I was talking to a man who worked in TAFE. He said, 'Annastacia, remember the last time you spoke to me up here in Townsville? Do you remember the last conversation we had? We were talking about the TAFE system and the benefits that it was giving the young people in my region.' I said, 'Of course I remember you.' And he said to me, 'I've been sacked. I've lost my job.' This was just a couple of months ago. In this state 24,000 people have lost their job as a result of this government. Services have been axed. The economy has been slowed right down. The unemployment rate is nowhere near the four per cent rate that this Premier promised. He promised an unemployment rate of four per cent and it is up at seven per cent. In the regions I travelled to, youth unemployment is as high as 20 per cent. The government axed Skilling Queenslanders for Work. There is no hope, there is no opportunity for these young people to gain a job.

There must be a better way. We owe it to the people who have been sacked in this state. We owe it to the families who have lost services in this state. There must be a better way. I will hold true the Labor Party values that I have been brought up with, that I learned from Wayne Goss, that I learned from Gough Whitlam—values of equality, opportunity and fairness. These are the values that I will fight for every single day of the week. As I lead the Labor Party into the next state election, we will remind every Queensland, every family, every household of the damage that this government and this Premier have inflicted across the state.

There are no high standards of government being held by this government. It is an absolute disgrace. They are more concerned about themselves than they are about governing Queensland. I know that there is a better way and I am going to find that better way for all Queenslanders.