



Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MOTION OF CONFIDENCE



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (10.20 am): I move—

That this House expresses its confidence in the Palaszczuk Labor government.

Mr Speaker, on 31 January, Queensland voters had a stark choice. They had a choice between a party whose long and expensive list of election commitments was based on asset sales and one that had modest, yet carefully costed and fully funded promises that did not rely on asset sales. They had a choice between a party that never listened and one that has spent the past three years listening and has made a commitment to calm, steady and responsive government based on a consensus approach. They had a choice between a party that had spent three years dividing our state and talking it down and one that wants to unite Queenslanders and take a positive approach to build on our state's strengths. On 31 January, voters made their decision to reject the LNP. It was not a subtle or a vague rejection; it was a comprehensive and definitive rejection that saw Labor make history by leaping from holding seven seats at the 2012 election to holding 44 seats at this year's election. After the election, I was asked by the Governor, His Excellency Paul de Jersey, to form government. I told His Excellency that I could do so with the support of the Independent member for Nicklin. Today, I am seeking an expression of confidence by this House to enable me to deliver stable government for the coming three years.

In the post-election period, Queenslanders witnessed the embarrassing spectacle of the Leader of the Opposition struggling for relevance. But what every Queenslander also saw was the simple numerical fact that the party opposite simply could not form government. What is worse and more embarrassing is the equally simple fact that the party opposite now has no plans, no policies and no ideas for governing Queensland. This opposition comes here today with its policy cupboard totally bare. Once it disowned its previous immovable commitment to asset sales, it was left with no feathers to fly. Yet today it will no doubt try to suggest that it should be sitting on this side of the House.

What our state needs and what was missing for three years is a government that listens, a government that wants to work with Queenslanders and a government that will talk up our state, not denigrate it at every opportunity just to play cheap politics. What was missing for the past three years was confidence. You do not instil confidence in state and regional economies by cutting the jobs of up to 24,000 workers. You do not instil confidence in business and others who create new jobs by constantly ringing false alarm bells about the state of Queensland's finances and its economy and you cannot create confidence if you spend three years playing the blame game and arguing with anyone who seeks to disagree with you.

My government will deliver confidence to this state. We will deliver confidence to business and industry, to workers, to individuals and to families and especially to those seeking jobs and training. That all begins by delivering sound and stable government. It begins with a commitment to a steady and measured implementation of our policies and our commitments.

My government got down to work on day one. At our very first cabinet meeting we put job creation front and centre of our agenda. This government is focused on job creation and implementing our Working Queensland jobs plan. The creation of secure jobs with fair wages and conditions is my government's clear priority. I have said previously that we face big economic challenges in tackling unemployment, including the current low coal prices and sluggish economic conditions among our major trading partners. But that means that we will need to work that bit harder to secure more jobs for Queenslanders, more training opportunities for those seeking or changing jobs and help business and industry to create the jobs for the future.

Since becoming Premier I have already met with many business and industry groups and my message is a simple one: my government will work with the private sector to create jobs and I want the private sector to have job creation as a priority too. More Queenslanders in secure jobs means a stronger state economy now and into the future. State cabinet has already endorsed our Working Queensland jobs plan and its individual employment policy elements. We have also established a powerful Employment Committee of Cabinet that has already met to ensure a whole-of-government approach to job creation. The new Employment Committee of Cabinet includes me as Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer and Minister for Employment and the Minister for Training.

Our Working Queensland jobs plan includes the reinstatement of Skilling Queenslanders for Work programs, with funding of \$240 million over four years. This is expected to help some 32,000 Queenslanders back into the workforce. It is unbelievable that those opposite fully supported the now shadow Treasurer's decision to abolish all of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work programs across this state over the past three years. We can all recall that that happened just days before independent consultants delivered their report showing that those programs delivered \$8 in benefits for the community for every \$1 that they took to run. So the current shadow Treasurer actively abolished a program that had a track record of success in training and employing Queenslanders. What is worse is that that happened with the 100 per cent backing of the current Leader of the Opposition and many others of those opposite who were in government at that time. Yet again, those opposite now have no plans and in office their only plan was to slash and burn regardless.

My government will implement its Advance Queensland program with funding of \$50 million over three years. It will reinvigorate science and innovation and create the well-paid knowledge based jobs of the future. Advance Queensland will also support researchers to stay in our state, stopping the brain drain so that our state benefits from their expertise. My government will invest \$40 million over four years in a Business Development Fund to help start-up firms create the jobs of tomorrow. We want to harness ideas, we want to foster innovation and we will invest in innovation in our state. We want to take the bright ideas of those in the business community and turn them into new opportunities, new jobs and new export income for our state.

We also have plans to generate jobs through new infrastructure projects funded under the Building Our Regions program, including a \$100 million contribution to a new sports stadium for North Queensland in Townsville. I know that the members for Townsville are very happy about this initiative. Those opposite actively neglected and ran down our TAFE system. We will rescue TAFE and restore its status as Queensland's leading vocational training organisation to help people get the training they need to get a job. We want to tackle the high levels of youth unemployment that are evident in so many parts of our state and, unlike those opposite, we have fully costed and fully funded plans to do so. As I travelled across the state over the last three years and during the election campaign, I was struck by how high that youth unemployment rate was in our regional centres and that those opposite over the last three years failed to do anything that would help those young people in our regional communities get the jobs that they deserve.

There was no hope; there was no opportunity. This government is committed to restoring hope and opportunity for those young people across the state. We have already announced an incentive to increase apprenticeships and traineeships through a 25 per cent payroll tax rebate worth \$45 million over three years. We also plan to ensure 10 per cent of workers on major government projects are apprentices or trainees, including those undertaken by government owned corporations. We will be establishing Jobs Queensland, a roundtable body to advise on workforce and training needs. We will be establishing Building Queensland to ensure major capital works projects worth \$50 million or more meet community demand and deliver jobs as well as value for money for taxpayers. This will make sure new major projects deliver best value for our taxpayers.

That stands in stark contrast to the sloppy and thoughtless use of taxpayers' funds exhibited by those opposite over the past three years. A case in point is the 1 William Street project that the Auditor-General reports show will cost taxpayers \$2.6 billion over the next 10 to 15 years, even though the taxpayers in our state will never own the building. This is the so-called good deal the

former Treasurer devised—once again fully supported by the current Leader of the Opposition and all the former cabinet ministers sitting opposite. The \$2.6 billion for taxpayers includes a rent bill for the new Executive Building of \$1.2 billion over the next decade.

In addition to creating jobs and strengthening our economy, Labor will repair the damage that the LNP did in just three years to our system of integrity and accountability in government. We will be reversing the LNP's laws allowing massive secret donations which were backed by the Leader of the Opposition.

An opposition member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Those opposite do not want to hear about accountability and integrity, Mr Speaker.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms PALASZCZUK: We will restore the independence of the anti-corruption watchdog in this state. We will not erode it as was done by the bungling former Attorney-General sitting opposite and the Leader of the Opposition who presumably cheered him on in the cabinet room. We will not sack the parliamentary committee overseeing the corruption watchdog in Queensland. My Attorney-General will consult on appointments to the judiciary with stakeholders such as the Bar Association and the Law Society of Queensland. We will have a merit based selection process for directors-general. We will not be appointing mates to those highly sought-after positions.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Michael Caltabiano! There is the former minister for transport over there. Michael Caltabiano—we all know how that ended. We will restore the estimates process in this state because my ministers are not afraid of accountability. We will treat this House with respect because this is the people's House.

This government will reverse the neglect and savage attacks on front-line services that were the hallmark of the previous government. We outlined a range of plans in the election campaign to do so and we have already started to put them into action. We also have plans to protect our greatest natural asset, the Great Barrier Reef. It supports 60,000 jobs and generates \$6 billion in economic activity. We must preserve it for this and future generations.

I have outlined just a few elements of the plans we have for our state, plans that we will implement over the next three years. On this side of the House we have clear plans, costed plans, funded plans and we have already started to implement them. But what do we see opposite us here today? We see a party that has nothing to offer. Just about every commitment it made to Queenslanders relied on asset sales. As we said consistently for three years, Queenslanders do not like and do not want asset sales. We said it over and over and over again. We heard the message in 2012; we listened. But did those opposite listen? No, they did not. They did not listen to Queenslanders. Now they sit there with not a single plan of their own for the future of Queensland. Nothing. Not even a plan for a plan. The post-election period must have been one of the few times in political history when a major party tried to argue it should form government with a program consisting entirely of a blank sheet of paper. Since the election the opposition can offer absolutely nothing.

The Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues are in denial. Before the election they were all 100 per cent behind asset sales. They were 100 per cent behind the attacks on Queenslanders that were the hallmark of the former government. They were 100 per cent behind the attacks on Queensland itself and its economy. They supported the massive waste of taxpayers' funds on the Strong Choices advertising campaign that spread misinformation so thick that the voters clearly rejected it. Since the election those opposite suddenly think that having no plans, no policies and no ideas qualifies them to govern this state. It simply does not.

Our greatest asset is the people of Queensland. No matter where they live in our vast state my government will look after the people of Queensland first and foremost. We will show that there is a better way for Queensland. At this point in Queensland's history what is needed most is confidence in our state, confidence in its people and confidence in its future. We need a government that can deliver that confidence even in the face of what we can already see is going to be relentlessly negative attacks from those opposite. Those of us on this side of the House will reject the negativity of those opposite. When it comes to confidence in our state, confidence in its people and confidence in its future, my government can deliver it. My government will deliver it and my government has already started delivering it.

A key to good government is goodwill. Today I want to take this opportunity to thank Queenslanders for the goodwill, support and trust they have shown to me and my government. I am honoured to be standing here today as Premier and leader of a government that has confidence in our state and in our future. I say to Queenslanders that I will work tirelessly to live up to your expectations. This is a government that will listen. We will always respect and govern in the best interests of Queenslanders.