




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (10.07 pm), in reply: First of all, I thank everybody for participating in the debate tonight. I thank all honourable members for their contribution to the debate on the bill. As I outlined previously, it gives my government enormous pride to introduce legislation that rights the wrongs of the past. What I mean by that is the first issue in relation to restoring the powers of the Speaker. As the member for Maroochydore quite rightly pointed out, as the former Speaker in this House, it did not work. It was a failed experiment. We have learned from those mistakes and we are now correcting that wrong and making it right. I thank the member for Maroochydore for her strong stance tonight in relation to very important issues.

The member for Maroochydore also raised some significant issues that she was overseeing when she was Speaker and, if she had those powers, would have been able to be more frank in her assessment of issues but unfortunately could not due to the confines of what she could say in relation to privileges of that committee. However, I would also make the point that the government of the day was also represented on that committee and her colleague, the member for Clayfield, had a big say on the running of that CLA.

Mr Nicholls: How could I? I was just one of seven.

Ms PALASZCZUK: He knows the truth. The second issue is, of course, having a member of the crossbench on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. I think everybody accepts that that is the right thing to do. The Committee of the Legislative Assembly should reflect the composition of this parliament. It is fair and equitable to have a member of the crossbench committee fairly represented on that committee.

On the third issue about the MP pay rises and linking them to public sector increases, I want to make it very clear. We heard from members opposite tonight and we heard the Leader of the Opposition asking, 'Where is the evidence?' I will tell the House where the evidence is—it is the recent election we just had. I made it very clear during the election campaign—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They do not like it.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order on both sides of the House. The Premier has the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The community expects more from its members in relation to pay rises. They expect more. What this legislation does is it links the pay rises to that of our public servants—and that is the right thing to do. It is the right thing to do; it is the moral thing to do. They wanted to talk about morals earlier today. Where was the morality when they awarded the former premier a pay rise equivalent to that of the President of the United States? It is not any secret—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Kawana is interjecting and he is not in his seat.

Mr Bleijie: The big issues of the day.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, the big issues. Let me come to the member—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Premier, will you resume your seat. I am about to issue a general warning. Members can only interject in this House if they are in their seat. That is a rule of this parliament. Please respect it. I call the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The member for Kawana had a lot to say when he was the state's Attorney-General, and was it not absolutely embarrassing! We saw the bungled boot camps, we saw the trashing of integrity and accountability—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Kawana, you will cease interjecting. The Premier has the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We saw the trashing of democracy in this state. That is the legacy of the former LNP government. Let me reiterate this very clearly: it was completely unacceptable that the former premier of this state was awarded a pay increase which was almost equivalent to that of the President of the United States of America. That was wrong and that was shameful. During the election campaign, I spoke to members of the public, to the communities and to families right across Queensland, and they made it very clear that they supported my stance on linking any future increases to the increases of public servants, and my government will stand by that decision. The moral question tonight is this: will this opposition stand by their moral convictions? I dare think they will not.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members, I cannot hear the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The community expects more from the standards in this House. What we have seen from those opposite is that they have learnt absolutely nothing.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister for Education, we do not need your provocation.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister for Education!

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Minister for Education will be warned if she persists. I call the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Is it not wonderful to see—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr Elmes interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: And the member for Noosa will be warned if he persists.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Is it not wonderful to see the member for Ashgrove back in this House. In summary, I would like to thank the members very much, but tonight it is about the public expectations. There is nothing more important than meeting those public expectations, and that is what my government is intending to do each and every day. That is why we will stand up for integrity and accountability in this state. That is why we are committed to restoring front-line services. That is why we are committed to protecting the environment. We will make sure that Queenslanders do not forget the legacy of the past, the legacy of the arrogance. That arrogance was clearly demonstrated to everybody, loud and clear, when they awarded themselves those massive increases. It is not happening anymore.

Tonight we right the wrongs of the past. Today is a good day for democracy because the Speaker's powers will be restored. The Speaker will run this parliament in the way that he sees fit. That is the right thing to do. Finally, the crossbenches will get a say on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. During the last parliament in the last three years, they were shut out of any kind of decision-making. I reflected just recently on the first three months of the former government, and it reminded me when I looked through the booklet that they threw the then opposition out of the parliamentary precinct within the first three months. Do members remember that? Today is another

anniversary. It is the anniversary of when the former health minister three years ago cut the funding for the AIDS Council in this state—

Mr Stevens: Mr Speaker, the relevance on this—

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is their legacy. Well, no more. Queenslanders woke up in January. They were sick and tired of the arrogance and of them being out of touch. You only have to look at the front bench over there to see it is still the same. The Leader of the Opposition was the health minister in this state. The member for Clayfield was the Treasurer.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Premier, you are provoking them. Perhaps you should speak through the chair please.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, I come to the member for Kawana—can I say any more about the member for Kawana? Where was the rule book? He is a disgrace, an absolute disgrace. It is going to take us a while to fix up the mess but we will work every day to fix it up and make sure that Queensland is a better place.