




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Abbott Government, Infrastructure Funding

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.41 am): Queensland is not only being ignored by the LNP government in Canberra; it is being punished. Tony Abbott is sitting on a \$5 billion special infrastructure encouragement fund which he doles out to reward states with lucrative incentive payments on the condition that they sell their assets. Labor has been explicit; we have been nothing less than clear: we will not sell our assets under any circumstances. Today I challenge the opposition to join us in not only lobbying Canberra to provide Queensland with its fair share but also sending a clear message to its colleagues in the Commonwealth that we will not be held to ransom and we will not be blackmailed into selling off assets in order to receive funding for critical infrastructure that we need throughout our state.

Tony Abbott has provided nothing for special infrastructure funding north of the Tweed. New South Wales has been the big winner in this regard along with Western Australia. Let us be very clear: if the Prime Minister and his Treasurer can provide additional funding to Western Australia, they can also provide it to Queensland. By giving Western Australia an additional nearly \$500 million, the Prime Minister has now established a convenient infrastructure funding precedent. Queenslanders and my government expect him to do the same. I challenge the LNP opposition to put that argument to the Prime Minister. I challenge those opposite to stand up for this state. I challenge them to stand up for Queenslanders. Sadly, not only are we being frozen out of badly needed extra infrastructure funds; billions of dollars of cuts to our hospitals and schools are coming too courtesy of Tony Abbott. Now is the time for the opposition to join with us, to stand up, to be united and make the determined call to fight Canberra's discriminatory approach currently applied to special infrastructure funding for Queensland.

As Premier I promised to consult widely and get a consensus opinion on major issues affecting my government and our great state. That commitment to Queenslanders means my government cannot sit by any longer and let an unfettered Prime Minister go unchecked—penalising each and every Queensland—denying us vital infrastructure funds, and I will not let him go unchecked. I intend to fight for every dollar at the upcoming Special Premiers' Conference in July and I will be fighting the Commonwealth for a states' funding model. The Prime Minister's current unyielding approach also strikes a blow at the very heart of our Federation. It makes a lie of his and his deputy's claims of any budget fairness. I cannot stress enough how their approach constitutes an attack aimed right at the heart of a federal-state funding model—a model that has been built up over a century and overall has served us well.

Once again by administering his special \$5 billion infrastructure funding pool in the manner in which he does, Mr Abbott is threatening to radically change the federal system in Australia. Well may they tour LNP marginal federal seats in Queensland, but he cannot hide forever, riding roughshod over vital infrastructure dollars that Queenslanders want and are rightfully entitled to. Queenslanders can see through their falsehoods and bullying tactics. I and my government will make sure of that—right up until the next federal election if we need.