




Speech By
Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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MOTION OF CONFIDENCE

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (4.15 pm): If anyone was in any doubt as to why the opposition should have no confidence in the government it is because of the member for Bundamba's contribution to this House this afternoon. Premier Palaszczuk stood in this place when in opposition and stood out there in the electorate and told the people, 'I'm going to have new standards in this place. My members will treat people with dignity. My members will treat people with respect.' Well I hope the honourable Premier heard the member for Bundamba's contribution to this debate. I hope members will read *Hansard* tomorrow and have a look at the language that the member for Bundamba used in this House. If I were in any doubt—and I was not—not to oppose the confidence motion, I have been relieved of that onerous duty.

I will be opposing the motion of confidence in this government for a number of reasons. I will start where we left off—with the member for Bundamba. I am particularly pleased to be the shadow minister for fire, emergency services, corrective services and police, and I note the honourable minister is my counterpart in that respect. So we should start with the member for Bundamba and her contribution to this debate today.

I was interested during the recent election campaign as to what the Labor Party's view on law and order was. We know—and one only has to look through the parliamentary *Hansard* records over the last few years—that the Labor Party have had a few positions on law and order. They are soft one day and then they are medium the next day. They are tough one day and then they are asking for forgiveness for being tough the next day. They have been a bit of a marshmallow.

Mr Costigan: All over the shop.

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes, all over the shop. I did say at the time that the one consistent thing about the Labor Party was their inconsistency. When we talk about the law and order agenda that the LNP pursued, it led to real results. I note the police minister and the Attorney-General are talking about wanting workable laws. Well I do not know about you, Mr Deputy Speaker, but when I look at crime across the state reducing by 10 per cent and when I look at robberies on the Gold Coast being down by 43 per cent, I am pretty sure the laws are working. The Premier ought to travel to the Gold Coast and speak to the business owners and the constituents on the ground at the Gold Coast and they will all too familiarly tell her why the laws are working.

But we have had the election. We accept the result and we will hold this government to account. What is the first policy the member for Bundamba releases? Prior to the election they had this rhetoric of law and order where they said they were going to repeal the bikie laws, if members recall, and replace them with workable laws. Then the laws became popular and they changed their position to: 'We are going to keep the laws. We are going to review the laws.' Then during the election campaign that turned into having a royal commission and setting up a task force. Now they are relying on the support of the Independent member for Nicklin, who has publicly said he does not want the laws to apply, so they are in a quandary there.

Now we know that they are reviewing the laws. The current laws will stay in place. Much to my surprise, I then heard about the first policy of the new Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services. They are big on rhetoric about law and order, but the first policy they announced was 'Get out of jail free'. Members may recall this article in the *Courier-Mail*. I assume the member for Bundamba did a freelance interview that the Premier's office was not fully aware of or fully in tune with. I hasten to say that we have all been there. The member for Bundamba did a freelance interview and talked to the journalist about all sorts of things that the member for Bundamba, as the new police minister, is going to do. So we had the headline 'Get out of jail free'. The Minister for Police was talking about releasing a number—we do not know how many, but I assume thousands—of prisoners onto our streets on community service orders. The police minister and, for that matter, the Attorney-General do not have the power to release prisoners on community service orders. That is a matter for our courts and our judges.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: Member for Whitsunday, hold fire; it gets better.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: It gets better, member for Hinchinbrook. The member for Bundamba also did a photo shoot in the *Courier-Mail* and in the same story she said they will release all these prisoners but she then denies it is going soft on crime. Then the member for Bundamba—I think this is one interview she will definitely regret and one sentence she will definitely regret, and we are going to remind people right around Queensland, particularly North Queensland, about this—is quoted as saying—

Jo-Ann Miller, the new Police and Corrective Services Minister, said she was worried about the conditions prisoners were in, doubling up in cells, and facing a construction bill of more than \$1 billion for new jails if radical action wasn't taken.

So the violin comes out and she now feels sorry because we have prisoners doubling up on mattresses. If we have more than six patients in hospital wards and if our military personnel serve overseas and have rations, then I hold the view that it is okay for two prisoners to be on comfortable mattresses in an air-conditioned room in a prison in the state of Queensland. The new police and corrective services minister is worried that prisoners have a comfortable mattress, air conditioning and natural light. She is worried about that so she wants to open the doors of our prisons in Queensland and let the prisoners out. My question to the honourable minister is: how many prisoners are being released under this new plan? What offences have these prisoners committed? Will the minister categorically rule out any form of violent prisoners—albeit minor violent prisoners, any physical altercations—being released onto our streets? That is the question the Queensland community wants answered.

The minister should travel to North Queensland and talk to the likes of Torhild Parkinson, one of the great local campaign action workers for law and order who has had vehicles stolen in Townsville. I know the member for Hinchinbrook has campaigned long and hard on the issue of law and order in Townsville. The minister will know that communities are suffering and will suffer more if the plan of the new police and corrective services minister eventuates. However, I cannot see that plan eventuating because within 24 hours this freelance interview was slapped down by the new Premier, saying that the police minister got it wrong. I can imagine the phone call from level 15.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: As I said, we have all been there. I can imagine the Premier's office reading the *Courier-Mail* the next morning and asking, 'What has the minister done?' Then the phone starts. 'Retract it, retract it.' But she couldn't because the police minister had done a lengthy interview with the *Courier-Mail*.

Let us talk about some other matters. The police minister talks about the VLAD laws. I have obviously taken a keen interest in the VLAD laws and the criminal organisation laws, as I will continue to do now as shadow police minister, because I support our men in blue on the beat. I will put their interests first every single day, every single night, every single year. I will always put first the interests of the men and women in blue who risk their lives first. If you ask, Mr Deputy Speaker, whether I would put first the interests of prisoners in an air-conditioned room who are doubling up on mattresses or our men and women in blue on the beat, I will always put first police men and women. In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, I put it to you and to the House that the new police minister would be the only police minister in Queensland's history who has talked about police releasing prisoners, not arresting prisoners. That is the policy position of this new police minister, and it is quite concerning.

The police minister obviously has not read the legislation because she says that the VLAD legislation deals only with bikies. It does not. The VLAD legislation deals with motorcycle criminal gangs, paedophile rings—the worst of the worst, child sex offenders, are caught under the VLAD legislation—and organised crime that does not involve motorcycles. So we have covered the underworld, the motorcycle gangs and child sex offenders in one piece of legislation.

Mr Molhoek: So does that affect the people who are out there peddling ice to our kids?

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the honourable member for Southport, because he knows all too well the issues on the Gold Coast and what his community has had to put up with for many years. I congratulate the member for Gaven on his election to this place because he campaigned for strong laws against criminal gangs. My advice to the police minister is to spend the time to sit down and read the legislation, because what she told parliament was incorrect in terms of the impact and effect of what the laws do.

To turn to other matters, we just heard the contribution of Minister Bill Byrne. The minister is another reason why members ought be in no doubt why they should not vote in favour of this confidence motion. He was talking about leadership. I think he was trying to do some numbers. He could not count to three, but he was trying to do some numbers over there. I ask the member for Rockhampton which ticket he is on: is he on the Cameron Dick ticket or the Jackie Trad ticket? What we saw in this place today is a lot of shuffling around. The member for Woodridge and new health minister talked about the ringing endorsement he got from the member for Woodridge. The member for Woodridge had to reply on the statistics for Woodridge because if he relied on statewide statistics he would be talking about 37 per cent, and in the words of the Treasurer that is a gerrymander and no government should govern with 40 per cent of the vote, I think he said. I know the member for Woodridge would have preferred things to be a little different. I know he would have preferred to be two chairs to his left but unfortunately he is—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: Well, the plan did not work out. Who knows what promises were made. I think it is important in this hung parliament to acknowledge a couple of facts. No party in its own right has the numbers to form government in the state, although I note that the Labor Party have done a deal on confidence with the Independent member for Nicklin. It is their right to do that and it is each individual member's right to do that, but that will not stop the opposition from holding all members to account on any agreements they made or what they might do in the future.

Mr Deputy Speaker—my apologies, I should say 'Madam Deputy Speaker'—you have to compare and contrast the likes of the ministerial team over there with the experienced team on this side of the chamber. We see a cabinet where one-third of the ministers are new in this chamber, and we wish them all the very best and we wish them well tomorrow in their first question time.

I think it is important that we make sure Queenslanders understand—and I am sure they do—that the Labor Party do not have any clear mandate. I have heard Labor members not only in this place over the last 24 hours but in the last couple of weeks talk about this great mandate that they have. As the Deputy Premier has been making all of these decisions that one would have thought the Premier should have been making, she has been talking about the mandate they got at the election. There is no clear mandate from this election. There is a clear indication though that the Labor Party got 37 per cent of the vote and there is a clear indication that the LNP got over 40 per cent of the vote, and if my sums are correct that means that over one million Queenslanders voted first preference for the LNP. If the Labor Party want to treat the LNP the way they have in this confidence motion, then they are essentially slapping the faces of over one million Queenslanders who put their confidence in the LNP, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): It is 'Madam'.

Mr BLEIJIE: Madam Deputy Speaker, we know that the Labor Party were elected on the back of preference deals and numbering every box in the state, and that is the optional preferential system we have. We know that the Labor Party were elected because of the likes of the unions. The comrades were shifted into gear—

Opposition member interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: The comrades were on the march right across the state. They are on the march in this place. We see the comrades filling all these positions over there. The left have certainly taken control of the Labor Party now. We see the member for Brisbane Central back in this going forward. I am keen to know what the member for Brisbane Central's position is on trading hours because her nightclubs will all be closed down under the government's policy. I look forward to the debate when that eventuates and to hearing what the member for Brisbane Central has to say.

Mrs Stuckey: How many jobs?

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the shadow minister for tourism—we will see how many jobs will be lost in the electorate of Brisbane Central because of that policy. There is no doubt that the member for Brisbane Central will have a good chat to the member for Stafford about that because he of course instigated that program under the Labor Party.

I was talking about the unions, and we saw during the campaign a lot of misinformation spread by the union movement. Unfortunately, we see that a lot of those people who spread that misinformation have now been elected into this place to represent electorates. I can see a few here, but I will honour the protocol of maiden speeches and I will not name anyone in particular in relation to their campaign tactics during the election.

It is clear going forward that this parliament will be like none other that we have seen since 1998. We can assure the people of Queensland that the opposition will be holding the government to account. We can assure the people of Queensland that we will be holding all members of the Labor government to account. I can assure the great police men and women, the firies, the emergency services personnel, the surf lifesavers, the SES and the corrective services staff in this state that the opposition will be talking to them, consulting them and keeping the minister accountable to that constituency because I do worry—

Mrs Miller: They don't want to talk to you.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take that interjection from the member for Bundamba who said that they will not talk to me. I am very happy to announce that I had a very good meeting with the CEO of Surf Live Saving Queensland recently who advised me that he had not even been contacted for a meeting by the new minister. So Surf Live Saving Queensland, and we all have them in our electorates—

Mrs Miller: Two cyclones.

Mr BLEIJIE: It was before the cyclones. Release the diary and let us see who you met with because I can guarantee in this House that the priority list on that side would have been the ETU, the AWU and the CFMEU. All of the major contributions the Premier made in her first two weeks as Premier were at conferences and CFMEU marches against the federal government. We know where the Labor Party priorities lie. I want to say to all the firies, emergency services personnel and police that we are very proud of the laws we introduced over the past three years, particularly the criminal gang laws, and we will not let the Labor Party tamper with those laws. We will not let the Labor Party put the lives of Queenslanders at risk by taking away any of those laws or the resources that we gave the police. I can assure the minister and member for Bundamba that we are talking already with police men and women about the concerns they have with her new policies, particularly a mass exodus of prisoners on our streets.