




Speech By  
**Stirling Hinchliffe**

**MEMBER FOR SANDGATE**

---

Record of Proceedings, 26 March 2015

### **MOTION OF CONFIDENCE**

 **Mr HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (6.16 pm): My final words at the end of my first incarnation in this House on 16 February 2012 were 'do not gamble on Campbell'. I will not proclaim myself to be a prophet on the basis of that one line because I know that I was not alone in my reservations about the former Premier's erratic and combative style and indeed his erratic and combative substance. However, when we come to addressing the question before the House—that is, confidence in the Palaszczuk Labor government—the word 'gamble' resonates strongly. One of the primary roles of this parliament is to provide a government for the state; that is why this debate has the primacy it has today. I am confident that we can indeed have confidence in the Palaszczuk Labor government, rather than the gamble that any alternative would represent. The whole question rests on balancing up where you can have confidence versus what represents a gamble. I am confident that the House will support the Premier's motion because we know the risk of the alternative.

Before I lay out some more of my arguments, I wish to place on the record my congratulations to you, Mr Speaker, on your elevation to that esteemed and honourable office. Your record in this place over the past 17 years that we have known each other, and indeed your time in this House, is a testament to your qualifications not only to hold the office but to adorn it. Equally, I wish to thank the electors of Sandgate for doing me the great honour of supporting my candidacy so strongly. It is no secret that, while I am close to being a lifelong northsider in terms of my time spent living in the northern suburbs of Brisbane, I have only lived in the Sandgate community for a couple of years. Those historic bayside suburbs that with the other newer communities make up the Sandgate electorate are rather famous for their justifiable parochialism. However, I can report that my family and I have been embraced by the local community and I will speak more during the address-in-reply on how great that community is and reflect on the support they have demonstrated for me and the Australian Labor Party. I want to thank the hundreds of locals who volunteered to support our grassroots campaign and who were determined to overturn the huge LNP majority and see a Labor government elected—and is it any wonder when we consider how the LNP treated the Sandgate electorate while in office?

Throughout the almost 12 months since I was endorsed by local Labor Party branch members to be our party's standard-bearer, I have been flooded by members of the community with examples of the arrogance of the LNP and the disregard and disrespect of our community and its values. Locally two issues stood head and shoulders above all others as symbols of how out of touch the former government was and how wrong the priorities of the LNP were. They were the attempt to close Eventide and the denuding of staff and courses at the Bracken Ridge TAFE campus.

The state's provision of residential aged care at Eventide, by the sea at Brighton, has been part of this state's proud history for almost 70 years. The local community has indeed grown in part around Eventide. I lost count of the number of local residents whom I doorknocked who told me that they had been volunteers at Eventide—had. Unfortunately, these volunteers and the rest of the community, the

staff, the relatives of residents and, most importantly of all, the residents themselves—vulnerable, aged people, very frail and very scared people—were victims of the LNP's arrogant ideology and the way it decided to impose it on the Brighton Health Campus. Under the Leader of the Opposition's watch as health minister, the edict was issued that the state would no longer have any role in the provision of aged care. We all understand the broad policy implications associated with the divisions between federal and state funding of various matters. However, this ideological position ignored the challenges of complex, high-care residents, and the order was given to get out and close the place.

Thankfully, a community campaign, primarily driven by committed family and friends of residents, embarrassed the then health minister into backtracking a little way and allowing some remaining residents to stay until the inevitable. While this was far too late for some who, under pressure, were moved and did not settle again or others whose families told me died from the fear of the prospect of being moved, that decision resulted in a nursing care unit that has become badly demoralised for both the diminishing staff, as they were made 'denecessary', to recycle a phrase of the Leader of the Opposition, and the residents. Thankfully, rather than gambling on the way in which a continuing LNP government would have ignored their continued pleas, my community has endorsed Labor's commitment to Eventide and to the future of the Brighton Health Campus, a future based on engagement with the community, not abuse and secrecy.

Secondly, the Bracken Ridge TAFE campus has been a beacon of opportunity for young northsiders for a very long time, in fact, even much longer than when I was a member of the North Point—as it was then called—TAFE Community Council at the turn of the century. I know that the members on this side of the House understand the value of TAFE in our communities, the high regard in which it has been held by local businesses and the families of those who have used it as a stepping stone to careers and trades. This regard is especially strong in the suburbs surrounding the Bracken Ridge TAFE whose residents have regarded the facilities in their midst as something of which they can be justifiably proud and which they, often through local small businesses, have contributed to developing. Under the LNP government they saw the place become a pale version of its former self. Staff and courses were cut so much that it almost seems like a ghost town. That is why I know that my community does not want to gamble on a continued LNP government who would likely be selling it off while continuing to wind down its commitment to vocational education and training. Its members voted strongly for Labor's plan to rescue TAFE, a plan to commit resources to a strengthened public provider of VET, not the continued undermining in favour of private provider mates.

My community voted strongly for a Palaszczuk Labor government. Of the 14 local electoral booths in Sandgate on 31 January I won 14; the Palaszczuk Labor team won 14. This is why I will be voting to express my confidence in the government. As I mentioned earlier, even without this clear delegation from the community that I represent, the logic is clear. The alternative to a Palaszczuk Labor government is a gamble, a chaotic risk, that our state cannot afford. The Leader of the Opposition has made contentions about the strength of the primary votes cast for the LNP on 31 January—just over a million primary votes as the Leader of the Opposition proclaims. Even if we decided to ignore the fact that this means that well over 1.5 million valid votes were cast for anyone but the LNP, it is important to understand that, as I said from the very outset, it is this parliament consisting of 89 members that will determine who forms the government of the state. I reiterate to the Leader of the Opposition: 44 is greater than 42 and with the good grace and the good sense of yourself, Mr Speaker, the stability needed to provide a confident, capable government is achieved. The alternative is a dubious one, one which claims some sort of mandate—a million-vote mandate I see—for a proposition which the LNP itself has, or so its members seem to claim, now confined to the dust bin of history, as my colleague the member for Bundamba and Minister for Police said earlier.

So what is their plan now that they have thrown Strong Choices out the door? In the absence of the Strong Choices plan, what is it? All we have heard so far in contributions is some sort of walk through the past. It has reminded me of episodes of that 1960 sci-fi series *The Time Tunnel*. There have been an awful lot of episodes that talk about the past, because I think the costumes are easier—they can dust off the speeches. The costumes are easier when they go to the past. Whenever they go to the future it turns out that they have to wear tin foil on their heads. That is what we will see opposite; whenever we start looking forward to a plan, it will be a tin foil plan: it will be made up on the run. Even then, one has to question how serious opposition members are about turning the page on the repudiated Newman government. Their speeches to this debate demonstrate that. I suspect the reality is revealed by the Leader of the Opposition's comment to the *Cairns Post* published on 4 March, 'We're bad at marketing.' So we hear that they are not repentant about the ways in which they betrayed the trust that the state had placed in them. They do not understand that they acted in a way and were committed to a set of policies that are repugnant to modern Queenslanders. They think it is a marketing problem. No wonder the Leader of the Opposition wanted to spend \$77 million more on administration and advertising, not nurses.

Recently the member for Mansfield suggested that Labor was not ready for office. He said that we had three years to prepare. However, members of the LNP had 14 years to prepare and look where that got them. This morning the member for Clayfield told the House that the business community is desperately worried about the government. I can assure him that I have been hearing the sighs of relief in the halls of industry as business leaders realise they will be listened to and not lectured or threatened. What we have seen over the last three years is a commitment by the former government to four pillars of the Queensland economy that collectively now represent less of the Queensland economy than when it came to office. If I were someone out there in the business world, I would not want the LNP trying to help me. It is going to end badly.

Queenslanders are sick of the roller-coaster ride that we have seen over the last few years. They are sick of the Newman government's commitment to fights being picked every day and policies that ignore all sorts of evidence and outcomes. Great examples of that were the scrapping of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program—a prime example under the unfortunate leadership of the now Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Indeed, another one that ignored evidence and outcomes was the defunding of the AIDS Council by the Leader of the Opposition as health minister. In contrast, our modest plan, Labor's modest plan, based on realism and our commitment to retaining income-generating assets in public hands, is a plan that Queenslanders trust. We will be positive about the state's future and its economy, and that will lay a basis for growth in the economy that has sadly been missing over the last three years. We need that confidence to lay that ground work. We have a plan for growth, debt reduction and improved productivity. That is why I am confident that this House will follow the wishes of our electors when we express our support for the Palaszczuk Labor government, a government that can deliver stability, capability and commitment to sound, moderate policies for a modern Queensland. I commend the motion to the House.