



Speech By  
**Tim Nicholls**


**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 30 August 2016

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Palaszczyk Labor Government, Optional Preferential Voting**

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.51 am): We have heard much today from those opposite in relation to how people might choose to vote at the next election. Here we have the height of hypocrisy by the Labor Party. We had the screeching of the member for Ashgrove across the chamber in her usual banshee fashion. We had the protestations—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members! Those comments are unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I withdraw. We had the protestations of the member for Ashgrove in her usual high-pitched fashion across the chamber with more and more vitriol as she sought political advantage. We had the comments by the member for South Brisbane in relation to trade and investment and those sorts of issues, completely discounting the effects of the 1997 Asian economic meltdown, which made no indentation whatsoever in relation to trade and overseas trade! We had the complete and utter meltdown in term of comments from the Premier about the issues in relation to the re-emergence of Pauline Hanson and One Nation. What we did not have was an apology to the people of Queensland for changing the voting system on 18 minutes notice in this place. What we did not have from 'Mr Apology', the member for Greenslopes—I mean the member for Woodridge—was an apology for the changes that he brought in—

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Leader of the House, if you persist you will be warned. It is not a good look.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, members. I have made similar comments about the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** The member for Woodridge comes in here and says, 'The member for Southern Downs should apologise.' He says, 'The member for Surfers Paradise should apologise.' He says, 'The member for Clayfield should apologise.' It was the member for Woodridge when he was the member for Greenslopes who steadfastly refused to apologise for doctors and nurses not being paid and who backed everyone else up in the House. It was only when he lost—it was only when he was ruminating on the decision of the people in 2012—that he came out and said on *Sky News*, 'I think we got the message wrong on debt and deficit. Those are really important to people.' He found that out too late. He came in here and apologised way too late—after people had not been paid and after people had lost their jobs—for the blunders in the health system. He still fails now to apologise for being part of a

government that introduced changes to Queensland's voting system without any public discussion, without any consultation and, indeed, without even having gone through cabinet or the party room to change the voting system on less than 18 minutes notice.

Why did they make that change? What did they foresee happening? They foresaw the member for South Brisbane and the member for Mount Coot-tha losing their seats to the Green movement. We saw the Labor Party lose the inner-city seat of the Gabba in the March council elections. What was the first thing that focused their minds? The first thing that focused their minds was the voting system and how they were going to change it. That was the only reason it was done. We had the spurious argument from the member for Sandgate, who stood up and said, 'The system has been in place for 25 years now. Why don't we chuck it out and change it? It's time for a new system.' He went on ABC Radio, a place where the Premier does not dare venture—she is afraid to go on and speak to Steve Austin. The poor old member for Sandgate was rolled up to go out there and explain why the changes were made on 18 minutes notice, why that was done to preserve the seats of the member for South Brisbane and the member for Mount Coot-tha.

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** When it comes to verballing, old son, you are the master, so we will listen to you. They come in here today and piously claim a holier-than-thou position on no foundations whatsoever. The foundations of their argument are not built on stone; they are built on sand and they sink as quickly. Here is the challenge: if the Labor Party in government under Annastacia Palaszczuk and Jackie Trad are so opposed—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to refer to members by their formal titles please.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** If the Labor Party in Queensland under the auspices of the member for Inala and the member for South Brisbane are so opposed to One Nation having a say in Queensland politics, here is the challenge: change the law back to what it should be. It is an easy thing to do. We will agree to it. All they need to do is have the member for Sandgate pick up the phone to the member for Callide and say, 'We have a bill that we want to bring to this House. We are restoring people's rights to vote in a manner that they choose fit and we are restoring their right not to vote if they do not want to.' That is the secret. We will agree with it. It will simply be going back to the situation as it was at the time before that fateful 18 minutes that saw those changes introduced.

It is a simple challenge. The question is: are the Labor Party up to it or are they going to shirk the responsible thing to do? Are they going to give the voters of Queensland back the choice that they had prior to the changes that were made in March earlier this year? Are they going to make the changes that will allow people to cast their vote where they want and, importantly, to not cast their vote should they choose not to or are they going to continue to cravenly kowtow to the extreme green movement—a green movement that does not want to see jobs and prosperity in Queensland, a green movement that hates farmers and hates development of the land, a green movement that used every fibre of their being to pass vegetation management laws that would have stifled agricultural development in this state, that would have led to serious harm to families and small businesses the length and breadth of the state, that would have restrained Indigenous development on the cape and that would have led to an increase in the price of housing for everyone buying a new home being developed in this state on greenfield land?

Those are not the words of the LNP. Those are the words of the people on the cape, the Indigenous communities on the cape; they are the words of the Property Council and the UDIA; they are the words of AgForce and Growcom—all of the groups who know that Labor getting into bed with the extreme greens is bad for business and is bad for jobs in Queensland. It is the extreme greens who continue to hold up the development of the resources sector in Queensland. It is the extreme greens wielding their power in the seat of South Brisbane—

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! I ask the Leader of the House to cease interjecting. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is the extreme greens who exercised their muscle power in the seat of South Brisbane and in the seat of Mount Coot-tha to get the government to say: no more do we want to see a coal industry in Queensland. No more do we want to see fossil fuels in Queensland. We do not support the transition to a low-emissions, gas-fired economy. We do not want to see anymore exploration development in Queensland.

The poor old member for Stafford knows what I am talking about. He does not have to go too far to find the extreme greens. He does not even have to go to South Brisbane; he just has to go to a caucus meeting on a Monday afternoon to find a few of them there. One might be the member for Yeerongpilly, that famous car driver sitting right behind him, who has no sympathy. He does not want nuclear, he does not want coal and he does not want gas; all he wants to do is ride around on a bike.

**Mr BAILEY:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition misquoted me and verballed me. I find it personally offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The minister finds your comments offensive.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I withdraw, Madam Deputy Speaker. What we do know is he wanted a carbon tax. Remember the carbon tax that the Palaszczuk government was talking about? That lasted about 48 hours. Whatever the member for Yeerongpilly's position is on gas, coal or nuclear power, what we do know is that he wants a carbon trading scheme in Queensland. He came out and spoke about it. The poor old member for Stafford knows what that means. That will be more fugitive emissions coming out of the caucus room than you could imagine.

There are many failings of this Labor government. They dither, they delay, they do nothing. They cannot decide amongst themselves. They cannot deliver jobs for the people of Queensland. They cannot deliver infrastructure for the people of Queensland. Importantly, their hypocrisy on the issue of compulsory preferential voting can be changed tomorrow if they change the legislation and abandon their extreme green views.

*(Time expired)*