



Speech By **Tim Nicholls**

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance; Liberal National Party

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.59 am): What an extraordinary display we have seen by the Labor Party in this House today! Today we have seen the education minister's performance asking questions about a hardworking representative, the member for Cleveland. Well might we ask: what was the member for Ashgrove doing in 2014? She did not even know whether she wanted to run for this place or not. She did not know what her future held at that stage. Was she out there fighting for her community? Was she making representations about schools? Was she doing anything in her local area in order to support her local community in the way that the member for Cleveland was; or was she more worried about the former member for Greenslopes who then became the member for Woodridge, who was worried about his plans for the future as well?

We all remember the member for Woodridge turning up at the ALP state conference and having a blue over who was going to have a say on who the leader of the ALP in this place would be. We all remember the member for Woodridge and the member for Bundamba—the soon to be ex-member for Bundamba if the ETU has its way—arguing over the election of the leader of the ALP. The member for Woodridge was out there stalking the member for Inala, plotting his comeback. He and his AWU cronies were out there. The member for Bundamba does not often get it right, but when she does she is spot-on. She said, 'Come on, Cam, we know what you're up to.' In 2014, the member for Woodridge was worried about getting the numbers, because he did not want to chance his arm in having to contest a seat. He wanted to waltz into a safe seat and take on the member for Inala. It was all planned. He was all set and ready to go.

What a performance we have seen today from the member for Sandgate. The member for Sandgate has done his solid best—and that is an uninspiring solid best. In his own words, he has been playing catch-up. They have been playing catch-up with Queensland Rail ever since he took on the role. The member for Sandgate talked about psychomotor skills and the need to test for competency, attention span and speed of reaction. That is what they should be doing up there at 1 William Street.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Leader of the House, the member for Clayfield is not taking your interjections. Please cease them.

Mr NICHOLLS: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The member for Sandgate should be tested for his speed of reaction. I like these psychomotor skills tests. They sound interesting. I would like to see them practised on the member for Sandgate to see how he goes—"Hang on a second, with the problem with the train network. Let me check. Where am I getting that information from? Twitter."

We also heard the Minister for Child Safety politicising the response to an emerging crisis in the system that should be protecting our most vulnerable. What was the speed of reaction for the Minister for Child Safety? Her speed of reaction was to go to a rock concert—to go down to Splendour in the Grass in Byron Bay on the weekend—when she should have been fixing it up. Indeed, she was passing the blame on to someone else.

Mr Powell: The member for Sandgate was at the Indy.

Mr NICHOLLS: I take that interjection from the member for Glass House. The member for Sandgate was at the Indy. While this government has been lurching from crisis to crisis, from excuse to excuse, from review to review and from report to report to not reporting, the LNP has been out the length and breadth of the state listening to Queenslanders.

Earlier today, I talked about some of our achievements in relation to private members' bills that we had brought before this House and to reviews and inquiries that have occurred as well. I did not have the time to complete our record. The LNP also extended the statute of limitations for child sexual abuse victims. We forced Labor, which voted against that legislation, to extend those reforms to all victims, not just those from institutions. In a nation first, we allowed deeds of settlement to be reopened if compensation was unfair and inadequate. That was not supported by the Labor Party in this place. We led the agenda in each of those important areas and reluctantly forced this do-nothing government to respond. In less than two years, the LNP opposition has introduced twice as many private members' bills than the Labor Party did during its entire last term in parliament. I place on the record my appreciation to all of the LNP members who contributed to these important achievements.

The LNP has also put out a range of policies. Just yesterday, the LNP announced its no body, no parole policy to ensure that the scales of justice are balanced in favour of the victims and not offenders. This policy will allow families who are devastated by this horrendous crime to seek closure by making it clear that the criminals are not driving the system, that it is a system that works in favour of the victims and their families. No longer will families be held hostage to the whims of people who have been convicted, after a full trial, of the crime of murder. Families will be able to seek redress. If those people who have been convicted do not provide assistance in locating the body, they will stay in jail.

The LNP is a party for all Queenslanders. That is why we have been developing positive plans for the future of this great state. That is why, since this House last convened, my team and I have been on the ground in Far North and Central Queensland listening to locals, hearing about their lives, their hopes and their concerns. Chief among those concerns, and particularly so in regional Queensland, is a hunger for jobs. The people of Far North Queensland are desperate to get the state moving again.

There is also a palpable rage over the crime rates, especially the spiralling proportion of offences that are committed by young people. Recently, in Cairns, over a six-week period, 140 offenders, many of them young people, were charged with a total of 576 offences. It is deplorable that the crime epidemic in Townsville, which is fast approaching that level in Cairns, is unable to be stopped by this Labor government. It seems powerless to take action to remedy the problem.

Let me be frank: the Labor government cannot stop it while it is enabling it. By smooching with the Greens and other assorted bleeding hearts, this Labor government has put its political survival ahead of the protection of its citizens. We are seeing that this week with the Labor government's nonsensical attempts to dismantle the most effective criminal gang laws in the country—laws that, if trashed, will send bikies and their attendant violence and racketeering streaming back into town, laws that have been so successful they have been copied in other jurisdictions, including the Labor jurisdiction of South Australia. Alarmingly, in Far North Queensland, we are seeing the watering down of youth justice laws to the extent that we now have a revolving door: offenders are hauled before the courts and released, only to embark on further crime sprees just days later. The situation has become so bizarre that the worst juvenile offenders are in court up to 20 times a year.

Just two years ago under our government, in Cairns, assaults were down by 7.4 per cent, robberies were down by 18.8 per cent, unlawful entry was down by 3.9 per cent and car theft was down by 25.2 per cent. Under this soft-on-crime Labor government, the floodgates have opened and the residents of Cairns are double-locking their doors. They are desperate to see the return of strong, fair laws and policies that both prevent and deal swiftly with the scourge of crime. Their experience is that only an LNP government has the will and the wit to be able to do what is needed to protect them, their families, their homes and their businesses.

From Cairns to Gordonvale, Innisfail, Port Douglas, Mareeba, Atherton and places in between, we were enthusiastically received, along with our terrific candidates at the next state election: Michael Trout from Barron River, Sam Marino from Cairns and Robyn Quick from Mulgrave. All three candidates are Far North Queensland locals who are ready to go. They will fight for and do much to progress their communities in this parliament.

Over our five days in the Far North, we met families, business owners, farmers, students, civic leaders and tourist operators. We held a highly successful community forum and shadow cabinet meeting. We listened, we learned and, of course, we delivered, with three major policy commitments over that period: our wi-fi hot spots in key tourism destinations, our decision to ban plastic bags and, of course, our signing up to protect the Great Barrier Reef. It is only the LNP that has—

(Time expired)