




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.57 am): It is so obvious that a member who sits in this House and proclaims to be from a regional area was reading a speech straight out of the Labor handbook which does not talk about the fact that the unemployment rate in rural and regional Queensland is through the roof. It does not talk about the fact that her Labor government has cut the Royalties for Regions program, a program that was successful, that was benefiting areas like the member for Keppel's. Instead, she reads a list of things that do not even benefit her region. She talks about a lack of services. When we were in government we put the health boards in, we put extra police on the front line and we certainly paid nurses at their highest rate ever. It was those opposite when they were last in government who could not even pay the nurses. It is embarrassing that we have a member on that side of the House who proclaims to be from rural and regional Queensland but who, just like her Premier, does not even appreciate that almost 90 per cent of this state is in drought.

While today we sit in this place we may hear the pitter-patter of rain on our roof, we may have seen some rain fall over the last couple of days in South-East Queensland and it might still be raining here in Brisbane, let us not forget the people who are out there hurting. Yes, there may have been some showers, but people in South-East Queensland need to understand that that does not mean the drought has broken. We have heard absolute silence today from the Palaszczuk government in relation to the drought which covers 87.94 per cent of this great state. It is obvious that those opposite do not appreciate what this means. To be drought declared, it means you need to have had a rainfall deficit in the last 12 months that is likely to occur no more than once in 10 years. It means no running water to fill the dams for pumping water to troughs or to allow the grass to grow so stock can feed.

It is extremely disappointing that the opposition needs to use the platform of this place to voice our concerns as to why the drought committees were not meeting, as I did in the last sitting of this parliament. After the last sitting and calls from both me and the member for Burnett, Steve Bennett, we saw the Burnett and South Burnett areas drought declared—only after we spoke out in this parliament and demanded that those drought committees meet. The Minister for Agriculture thought it was fine for those drought committees to meet in May. It is simply not good enough to have this do-nothing Labor government sitting here in Brisbane and not getting out into the regions. They need to understand what it means for those people on the ground. It means that they can get relief from their electricity bills. It means fodder subsidies and freight subsidies.

Government members interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I hear the interjections of those opposite. How ignorant they are to what rural and regional Queenslanders are facing! While the Premier is over there talking to the Queen, we on this side of the House were out there talking to rural and regional Queenslanders. That is why the Leader of the Opposition and I went on a regional tour up the coast to Mackay, Bowen, Ingham, Townsville and Cairns.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr Janetzki interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): Order! Member for Toowoomba South and member for Logan, I am monitoring your rather loud conversation up the back. You are both warned under standing order 253A.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: We were out there listening and meeting with locals in our forums through our politics in the pub events. They were not Labor forums filled with party hacks and unionists. They were truly open events. No question was off limits. At times the meetings were fiery and at other times laughter filled the room. We learnt a lot. We learnt that there is a lot of pain out there in regional Queensland. We learnt that the Palaszczuk Labor government is not listening and, worst of all, the Palaszczuk government is not delivering for rural and regional Queensland. The people of regional Queensland can see through this do-nothing Labor government. All they need to do is look at the infrastructure that was flowing under the LNP government that has now been cut. They just need to look at the dreadful unemployment rates for outback Queensland at 35 per cent.