




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Record of Proceedings, 2 March 2017

MOTION: PALASZCZUK LABOR GOVERNMENT, UNIONS

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (6.28 pm): I rise to oppose the motion as a very proud unionist and as a very proud ex-leader and secretary of the Queensland Council of Unions—the first woman elected to that position. It was an honour to represent the working people in the state, as it is an honour to represent all Queensland in the current position that I have in the parliament. The member for Kawana said that they know why we are all over here and I think he was trying to point to the fact that it had to do with the union movement. I want to enlighten those opposite. I keep saying this but it cannot get through their heads. I will tell them why we are over here, and it is because of the member for Kawana! That is why we are over here!

The member for Kawana was one of the worst industrial relations ministers that this state has ever had and one of the worst attorney-generals this state has ever had. Members should ask any member of the legal profession about the performance of the member for Kawana as the attorney-general. I know why I won the seat of Brisbane Central. Those lawyers there were coming out in droves to vote for me so that they could get rid of the member for Kawana.

What has happened to the Liberal Party? At least we on this side of the House know what we stand for. We stand for protecting workers in this state any day. We will put our record against that of the members opposite at any time.

I am having a sense of déjà vu here. Someone mentioned groundhog day. I have lost count of the number of times the members opposite have had to scrape the barrel and bring up their union-bashing motion. The members opposite are bereft of ideas. The Leader of the Opposition asks, 'Has anybody got any ideas?' and there the member for Kawana is again saying, 'I have, I have, I have. In the top of my drawer I have one. Let's bash the unions.' It is really sad that the Leader of the Opposition gives them a go. He says, 'That's a good idea. We haven't done that one for a while. There's nothing else we can think of.'

Let me help the members opposite a bit. I will tell them what the unions think about their record when they were in government. There was not a public servant that the members opposite looked at that they did not want to sack. They sacked 14,000 of them. The members opposite ripped away the common law rights of injured workers. Recently, I received a very sad letter from the member for Coomera about one of his constituents who, because of the laws brought in by those opposite, was denied common law access. The daughter was so upset that her father had not been compensated properly that she wrote to the member for Coomera, but he failed to tell her why that was the case. I will tell the member for Coomera why now. The father is being compensated because of the changes that we brought in. I say to the members opposite to not think for one second that we do not govern for all of Queensland. We certainly do. The members opposite imposed a 16-month wage freeze on the public sector. That is the legacy of the members opposite. The members are so bereft of ideas that I will give them a few.

Mr Cramp interjected.

Ms GRACE: We have the wannabe union official from Gaven. Let me tell him that they will never have him. He can keep wishing, but he will never get a chance. Let me give the members opposite some ideas that they can move a motion on. Let us talk about the penalty rates that are being stripped from workers. There is silence over there. Let us talk about exploitation of workers by labour hire companies. There is silence over there. Let us talk about the massive increases in executive pay. There is silence over there. Let us talk about the exploitation of ordinary workers. There is silence over there. I am going to miss the member for Callide but, after that mediocre effort, I know why he is leaving.

(Time expired)