




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Record of Proceedings, 16 February 2017

MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (5.13 pm): I rise to speak against the motion put by the member for Clayfield. The very idea that a government could be deemed somehow bad for consulting is astonishing to me. It is astonishing because the very hallmark of good, progressive government is its ability to be flexible and to consult with experts, even scientists and engineers, in order to gather facts—not alternative facts, but information that helps inform government on the best way forward.

An excellent example of the value of reviews is the Palaszczuk government's commitment to undertake a commission of inquiry into the closure of the Barrett Adolescent Centre. The inquiry handed down its findings on 24 June 2016, criticising the decisions of the Newman-Nicholls government that led to the tragic outcomes we saw. The commission also made findings that were critical of systemic issues and made six recommendations, including provision of a new bed based service for young people with complex mental illness.

As a result of this report, which was made public on 18 July last year along with the government's response, the Palaszczuk government accepted all recommendations in principle and has committed to building a bed based service for young people with complex mental illness. In fact, a detailed implementation plan for all recommendations has been endorsed by cabinet, as we know. I am pleased to say that the planning for the new facility, which will be at the Prince Charles Hospital, is underway, and it is underway in consultation with former Barrett patients and their families. I do not know what those opposite have against consultation and collaboration. To me, those two things are cornerstones of good governance.

I am often out and about talking to people in my electorate in Ipswich, and I can tell the House that they have not forgotten the chaos of the Newman-Nicholls government—and chaos is the word for it. People right across Queensland had services and jobs ripped away from them. What I am hearing time and time again from people in Ipswich, and what I can see firsthand in my community, is that my community is flourishing under the steady, consultative and collaborative hand of the Palaszczuk government. Those opposite need to be reminded that in the three chaotic years of the Newman-Nicholls government no fewer than 76 reviews were undertaken by their government. Even worse, many of those reviews were politically motivated—like the Queensland Commission of Audit which led to the doomed Strong Choices campaign. That is \$100 million down the drain, and that is just one example. I cannot help but think that the opposition are so opposed to reviews—real reviews, not politically motivated ones—because they do not believe in consultation. Maybe they do not believe in it, but I can assure them that Queenslanders believe in it and people in Ipswich believe in it.

In the lead-up to the 2015 state election and after, I spoke to many people who were directly affected by the closure of the Barrett Adolescent Centre. I can assure the House that the commission of inquiry that this government committed to was not an indication to them that we were not doing anything. It is quite the opposite. That is the difference between this government and the opposition.

This is a government that brings Queenslanders with it. It is a government that listens and formulates policy based on facts—facts that are gleaned through consultation and collaboration and, yes, through reviews.

I would like to name some of the important reviews that this government has implemented. We implemented an inquiry into the Grantham flooding. Those people needed answers, and through this inquiry they got them. We implemented an inquiry into organised crime. This is such an important issue to Queenslanders, and this review highlighted areas that required further resourcing. We implemented an inquiry into the financial abuse of seniors. We found that in one year more than 1,500 seniors reported financial abuse through this review, and that is just the ones who reported it. If we want to have a community where our older people are free from abuse and feel safe, we need to actually consult with them and collaborate with stakeholders in order to help them.

I am proud to be part of the Palaszczuk government. One of the reasons for that is its consultative and collaborative nature. I do not think anyone has ever been criticised for listening. I am not the only one who thinks that. I would like to share a quote from the Borbidge-Sheldon review. It stated—

The overwhelming election win of 2012 led to a changed dynamic where the leadership team of the parliamentary party in a sense of hubris isolated itself from the organisational wing. The primary consequence of the breakdown was the lack of consultation on policy or political party or campaign matters for the best part of the crucial first two of the government's term.

Perhaps if they listened and consulted, they would not be sitting on that side of the House.