




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MOTION: PALASZCZUK LABOR GOVERNMENT, PERFORMANCE

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (6.16 pm): I am very pleased to contribute to this debate tonight. Is it not interesting that we have just heard the member for Mudgeeraba talk about a cover-up when her own position is entirely unclear and contradictory. When asked recently by Steve Austin on ABC Radio about the release of the report into the death of Mason Jet Lee, the member said that she would take the advice of the DPP if she were in government. We know that that advice says that that report should not be released until after the trial—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock! We are not going to have a debate. Member for Mudgeeraba, if you find something offensive you know what the appropriate wording is.

Ms FENTIMAN: At first she said she would take the advice of the DPP. When asked again she said that the opposition would release the report. When Steve Austin attempted several times to confirm the member's position she said that she would not prejudice a fair trial. One cannot hold all these positions at the same time. I table the transcript of that interview. If members have time, it is a cracker of a read.

Tabled paper: Transcript from ABC Radio Brisbane—Mornings with Steve Austin, 11 April 2017, with member for Mudgeeraba, Ms Ros Bates MP [\[685\]](#).

I am happy to put this government's record on transparency and accountability against that of those opposite any day of the week. Let us take a minute to have a look at the record of the Newman-Nicholls government when it comes to transparency. Let us not forget that one of the first things they did when they came to government was gag community organisations. They literally covered the mouths of those hardworking front-line community organisations that advocate on behalf of some of the most vulnerable people. They literally covered their mouths.

The Queensland Law Society president at the time said 'community organisations who are at the coalface of service provision have the professional know-how and practical experience to intelligently inform government policy'. He went on to say that it 'encroaches on the right to freedom of opinion and expression and only makes for poorer legislative outcomes'.

They were not just a government focused on cover-ups; they also used their new-found power vindictively. Some \$2 million was cut from the Queensland Association for Healthy Communities after they spoke out about the rights of gay and lesbian couples. St Vincent de Paul were told by media release that \$350,000 was cut from their funding after they allegedly breached this contractual requirement. I am so proud that one of the first things this government did when we came to power was remove those undemocratic gag clauses. While they were busy covering the mouths of community organisations, they also went about cutting other organisations—\$40,000 was cut from DVConnect and \$150,000 was cut from the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre on the Gold Coast.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I apologise for interrupting, Minister. Member for Mudgeeraba, you have had an opportunity to speak. You are now trying to speak over the top of the minister. It is not on.

Ms FENTIMAN: They did all of this quietly and hoped that everyone was looking the other way. The ultimate cover-up here is the crocodile tears from those opposite about reviews into child deaths not being released. Since I have been the Minister for Child Safety, I have ensured that annual reports into the deaths of children known to my department—

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I apologise for interrupting, Minister. Member for Burleigh, you are warned under standing order 253A. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action.

Ms FENTIMAN: I have always released the annual reports into child deaths. Anyone can go to the department of communities' website and see those reports. There is one missing. There is one annual report into child deaths that has never seen the light of day—that is, the 2013-14 Child Death Case Review Committee report. Why? Because the Newman-Nicholls government removed the requirement to publish this report from legislation. That is right; they legislated their way out of transparency. In what they described as 'streamlining', they removed the section of the act that required publication of a child death report that would inform the community of any concerning trends developing in relation to these tragic cases.

During the debate of that legislation, the then child safety minister, the member for Aspley, said that a key 'track' of the bill was to 'refocus oversight on learning'. While the department may take learnings from those child death annual review reports, it means that the general public of course were kept in the dark about any of the learnings from those reports. Despite their legislation removing the requirement to publish these reports, this government continues to do so. I have made a commitment that I will continue to publish those reports.

The member for Mudgeeraba continues to say that the public are sick of politicians who are all talk and no action. Well, they are—sick of an opposition that is all talk but has no ideas to fix the system.