




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Mackenroth, Hon. TM; Gold Coast Commonwealth Games; Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): I rise to acknowledge the passing of the late Terry Mackenroth and pass on the condolences of all LNP members and myself personally to Mr Mackenroth's family and friends and of course to the Australian Labor Party.

Like many Queenslanders, my husband, Jason, and I were thrilled to attend the 2018 Commonwealth Games. The Gold Coast and every other community which hosted these events did an amazing job. It is interesting to note that Townsville and other areas in Queensland hosted the games. However, it appears that those on this side of the House are in trouble if they attended anywhere else but the Gold Coast, but I will leave that be.

The whole world now knows that Queensland is the greatest sporting state in this sports mad nation. Our athletes were inspirational. Our volunteers were also inspirational. We were in awe of all athletes we saw across all of the venues on the Gold Coast. I was impressed by the pride and professionalism of volunteers and other games staff. However, the performance of the state Labor government was less impressive. The opening ceremony was ruined for thousands by an embarrassing transport failure. There were huge delays getting in and out of the stadium, with many spectators not getting home until two or three in the morning. Instead of apologising though, this government said that anyone who expected a transport system to work well was a lunatic. What an insult to the Queenslanders who came out to support the games! Rather, it is probably lunacy to expect this government to run public transport competently.

What should have been a bumper fortnight for Gold Coast hotels, restaurants and bars became the quietest Easter anyone could remember. People were urged to stay away by this Labor government, and that is just what they did. Even when the impact of the government's bungled message was clear, the Premier did nothing to tackle it because the Premier and her focus was on whether she would speak at the closing ceremony. Photo opportunities and getting a speaking spot at the closing ceremony were the top priorities of this Premier for these games. The athletes were sidelined during the closing ceremony, but everyone got to see the Premier and Peter Beattie.

Our amazing athletes deserved to be in the spotlight, but this government blatantly used the games for self-promotion and to bury bad news—bad news like the Queensland Competition Authority's final report on South-East Queensland bulk water prices. The report recommended households pay between \$50 and \$90 more for their water each year which is three to five times the rate of inflation. Over the past decade bulk water charges have increased by an incredible 400 per cent. It takes an extraordinary degree of incompetence to push up the price of water by 400 per cent, but Labor has managed that.

An opposition member: Gold medal!

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It is a gold medal performance by the Palaszczuk government. Its lack of planning and mismanagement saw this state spend more than \$9 billion on a water grid that is now redundant or defunct. Who pays the price for this failure? It is not the Premier or her predecessors. The price is paid by struggling Queenslanders who see their bills go up and up year on year under this government.

It is the same story with electricity. Last week we saw the energy minister trying to spruik the government's \$50 energy rebate. Fifty bucks does not go very far. It is less than \$1 a week. The rebate is a rotten deal for Queenslanders, and this government knows it. If those opposite believed that this rebate was so good, where was the Premier spruiking it? It should have been a win for the Premier fronting the cameras. Instead, she sent out the member for Stafford and he was left to sell this pathetic payout because the Premier and her Treasurer know the truth. Electricity customers are being gouged to the hilt by this government. Industry experts know what is going on.

The latest Grattan Institute report revealed that our publicly owned networks have been massively overvalued to justify high bills to the Australian Energy Regulator. The institute said that the value of the poles and wires should be written down by between \$1.7 billion and \$3.9 billion—a policy that the LNP took to the last election.

A second report by analyst Hugh Grant confirmed that almost half of the network charges paid by customers is going straight back to the government. Labor's secret tax has siphoned off around \$5 billion from consumers to the government. The profit margin on our network charges is a staggering 47 per cent. It is costing the average family \$470 a year.

Like I said last week, this government's electricity rort is enough to make a banker blush. The gold plating of the network ended under the LNP, but the savings have gone straight to the Palaszczuk government—not to the people who pay the bills. Labor gives back \$50 for every \$470 it takes from consumers' pockets. That is labornomics if I have ever heard it. What a scam! This government is squeezing every dollar it can out of every Queensland and it does not understand the financial struggle that millions of Queenslanders face.

Let us look at fuel pricing. Prices are higher now than they have been for three years. When I became the leader of the LNP I said that I was going to offer solutions to this government, so we have handed this government our homework, yet the Premier could not even copy it right! It is a half-baked trial. How about you just implement the plan like the other states have and save Queenslanders some money? If this government had implemented our plan 14 weeks ago, people would have 100 bucks in their back pockets—two lots of the energy rebate that this government has offered people per year—but it has only done this after 14 weeks. This government should have the backbone to back what the LNP knows—looking after Queenslanders and doing something about fuel prices. Whilst we welcome the half-baked U-turn, why did it take so long? Why has it taken you so long to swallow your pride and just say, 'LNP, we agree. Let's get it done.'

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Through the chair, member for Nanango.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: After today's U-turn, I would also urge the government to think again about its waste tax. When Ipswich City Council announced it was ending recycling, the Treasurer did not waste a moment before announcing that she would fast-track a new waste tax through the parliament. However, she was unable to say exactly when the tax would be introduced and she could not say how much it would be or how much it would raise or what it would be levied on or who would pay it or who would receive it or what the tax was going to be spent on.

Some people would be fazed by this stunning lack of detail by the Treasurer of Queensland, but not this Treasurer. Her motto is, 'Tax first and ask questions last.' Under this Treasurer there have been five new taxes. Under Anastacia Palaszczuk and her tax addicted government, there have been five new taxes. At every turn we know that Queenslanders are faced with new taxes, higher charges and rising bills. What do they get in return? Secret reports that are flushed out into the media under the cover of the Commonwealth Games. There was the report on child deaths and the report on the Bundaberg water debacle. We had the prince in Bundaberg and he was not even told that he was drinking contaminated water—or alleged contaminated water. Shame on the Premier for hiding these secret reports! Queenslanders are tired of Labor's failures. They deserve a government that works for them, not a government that takes and takes and taxes and taxes but refuses to deliver.

(Time expired)