




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): I rise today as Queensland's debt soars towards \$83 billion and say that I believe that politicians should be careful with public money. We must never forget that each and every dollar the government spends comes from taxpayers: mums and dads, people who live in Queensland. Every dollar that is frittered away is a dollar that does not go into our schools, our hospitals, our roads, our police or drought relief.

The words that came out of the Premier's mouth this morning were, 'I am angry it came out of my budget.' When she was talking about the wasteful spending at the Sheraton Mirage during the Commonwealth Games for herself, her 12 staffers and a couple of other ministers, which equated to just over \$81,000, the Premier's comment was, 'I am angry it came out of my budget.' Whose budget did the Premier think it would come out of? It is the taxpayers of Queensland whose money she frittered away and spent—and for what? Did the Premier even stay in that accommodation for \$700-odd per night each and every night? When the Premier was in Bundaberg, for example, with Prince Charles enjoying a splash of Bundy rum, did the Premier stay in that accommodation down the Gold Coast that cost Queenslanders over \$700 a night? I think not.

Between them, the Premier and the games minister racked up a luxury hotel bill of just over \$20,000—that was just for them personally. How many Queenslanders could afford to spend \$20,000 on two weeks accommodation—just on their hotel bill—not even starting to talk about their expenses or having to buy their own go card? Other Queenslanders needs to put that on the bill. Most people would only dream of staying at the Sheraton for two weeks, but for the Labor ministers and the Labor Premier it is simply another perk.

I note the Police Commissioner has defended using the accommodation for security reasons. However, police orders do not explain the remaining \$60,000 bill that other ministers and staff incurred. On top of the accommodation—just the Premier's accommodation, which was over \$10,000, and the games minister's accommodation, which was over \$10,000—the Premier of this state also claimed \$1,400 in expenses and allowances, and I have already touched on the go card or the rail fare for \$8. It beggars belief that this Premier is that out of touch and that arrogant that she allows this to go through and uses the excuse that it was 'for security reasons'. When the Premier does not believe that her expenses should be in question it is a real concern. It is a concern when this sort of money simply escapes her attention as waste.

Mr Hunt: She's out of touch.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will take that interjection from the member for Nicklin. The Premier is out of touch because what Queenslanders can afford to spend over \$20,000 on two weeks accommodation? This is the state that has racked up \$83 billion in debt because of incompetent successive Labor governments. It is no wonder the Premier is so flippant with taxpayers' money.

Labor's spending spree is sickening to the Gold Coast businesses whose Easter takings were wiped out by the Palaszczuk government's 'stay away from the coast' campaign. That was a smart one! Not only did the Premier have to take her two chauffeurs to the Gold Coast to make sure that when she was staying in her luxury accommodation she could be driven from the car park to the corner store—she had two chauffeurs to do it for her—or the train, she and her government also told everyone to stay off the M1, because her two chauffeurs wanted to drive flat out when they went out. That is right, she was catching the train; she did not need two chauffeurs. Never mind the fact she lives only 60 minutes from the Gold Coast. They had the 'stay away' campaign and the 'stay off the M1' campaign. Currently four restaurants and cafes are failing every week on the Gold Coast, although I note that the Sheraton Mirage certainly has not been affected by that downturn during those two weeks.

It is not only the Gold Coast that is struggling. It is unfortunate that the Labor government is so out of touch that it only worked out or remembered after relentless pushing from those on this side of the House and by the media that there is a drought in Queensland. The drought has been going on in some places for close to seven years and, in other places, around five years. We have seen tragic fires and bushfires over the last couple of weeks that have taken out any feed that some of these places had left. It is incredible to think that the Palaszczuk government only just jumped on this. What did they do? They donated \$100,000 of taxpayers' money towards a drought fund, remembering that is only \$20,000 more than what the Premier spent on her two-week Gold Coast experience. How do they think a struggling farmer feels about that one? It is an absolute shame.

Mr Mander: They've all gone silent now.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Yes, they have their heads down because they know that they have missed the point on this one. It is waste, it is arrogance and it is cover-up and secrecy by this government.

Those out west and across regional Queensland have shown incredible resilience, but they are desperate for help. I welcome the announcements made by the federal government in recent weeks. I have been touched by the generosity that Queenslanders everywhere have shown towards the Queensland Drought Appeal. The people of our cities stand behind our farmers and I thank them for it. It is a shame that the Palaszczuk government sowed the seeds of division when it passed its antifarmer laws earlier this year. It is these laws that are hurting our farmers who are simply trying to use the scrub that regrows when it is cut down—some people call it a weed; it is called a mulga, a woody weed—to feed their droughted stock.

Unfortunately, the Premier and her side are completely out of touch. The great divide that has been created by those opposite between Brisbane and the rest of Queensland is growing year on year. One need only look at the slashing of maternity centres in regional Queensland under successive Labor governments. Rural members know that the guts have been ripped out of maternity services in the bush over the last 20 years. Labor has closed 26 maternity services in communities since 2000, but it was the LNP that worked to reopen them. We also worked to ensure that we have rural generalist surgeons in hospitals such as Kingaroy, where we placed two rural generalist surgeons so that mums could be protected while they were having their babies. We put in place the maternity rejuvenation project, which was straightaway cut by the Palaszczuk government as soon as they got in, leaving mums and bubs in danger when mums wanted to have their babies in regional areas. It is only the LNP—

(Time expired)