




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Storms; Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): We are used to extreme weather events in South-East Queensland—in fact, all over Queensland—and in the electorate of Nanango, but last week's wild storm was something else. The community felt the fury of a supercell, and its impact will linger for a long time. Federal agriculture minister David Littleproud and I inspected the damage immediately after the storm hit. Shane Francis' farm lost 95 per cent of its remaining peach crop. They still had 75 per cent left to pick, and north of Murgon Peter Enkelman lost a whole irrigated wheat crop. We saw heartache and bravery in equal measure.

My thoughts are with the Creagh family after little Connor was critically injured during the clean-up at his grandmother's Hodgeleigh property. On behalf of the opposition we wish him and his family all the best, and we particularly wish Connor a full recovery. The immense bravery of Fiona Simpson shielding her baby daughter from serious injury was extraordinary. As a mum, of course we know there is nothing more precious than our kids, but Fiona also had her grandmother in the car. Fiona really did put her body on the line.

Fiona's was not the only story of bravery. I visited Kumbia State School, where the teacher had to shield children from flying glass and ice after hail shattered all the windows in the classroom. Children had to line up underneath tables on the other side of the room. The next day when I visited the school the kids talked to me with excitement about the hail storm. One little boy had to shield his best mate's sister Penny and protect her from the hail. They talked about hail hitting them in the arms, legs and heads, but guess what? They were back in class again in another classroom on Friday. I want to pay tribute to the kids and teachers of Kumbia State School for their resilience and bravery. That is just one story to come out of the supercell storm.

I also want to pay tribute to the emergency services for their brilliant work. The community pitching in to help their neighbours is one thing, but we will be forever thankful for the help of those who responded in our time of need. We know that we are a resilient bunch. Crops will recover and damage will be repaired, but the coming months will be tough for my electorate as the massive recovery effort continues. We must also remember the major fires around Woolooga and the Somerset. I urge everyone to look out for each other, and of course together we will get through this.

The past few weeks since we were last here in this parliament have shown that the Labor government is one of hubris, cover-ups and secrecy. That is why the Palaszczuk government took the appalling step of dumping 75 reports late on a Friday night as Queenslanders were preparing for the grand final long weekend. Labor went to the last election promising transparency and accountability. The deliberate and calculated decision to dump 75 reports late on a Friday evening was anything but accountable. It was anything but transparent. Those opposite hoped the public would not be properly informed about those reports, but they were wrong.

While the Labor government failed to be transparent, journalists and the opposition took it upon ourselves to inform the public. News reports that weekend read, 'What transparent government really doesn't want you to know: rail dysfunction, child crime revolving door and a \$23 million stadium black hole are just some of the secrets buried in a brazen late-night report dump.' That is how the media reported it. Labor's bid to keep this information under wraps failed. They succeeded in showing Queenslanders how hollow, arrogant, out of touch and secretive they really are. This government treats the Queensland public with utter disdain.

In relation to rail, the reports show that entire departments are in crisis. There has been an horrendous waste of taxpayers' money. The report into Queensland Rail shows that, despite more than 10,000 applications to a recruitment program for trainee drivers and guards, QR achieved a net increase of only 40 additional drivers. They have had 10,000 applicants but they have only achieved 40 additional drivers. The report shows that QR is plagued by problems and Labor's rail fail is here to stay. There are 470 fewer services, and the minister and the Premier cannot even give a date when they are going to get it right and fix it up. It is a joke.

The transport priorities of this Labor government are twisted. It does not matter if commuters cannot catch a train as long as the unions are happy. It is no wonder the Premier's hand-picked QR chair has resigned. There are clearly fundamental problems at Queensland Rail, and Labor's incompetence is at the heart of it. We need to undertake an external recruitment of drivers.

It is not just Queensland Rail that is in crisis. The report dump shows that Queensland Health is failing to meet basic treatment efficiency targets, but Labor's health minister is more focused on renaming the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital than fixing issues like ambulance ramping or the closure of regional maternity units. Kids are having chemo treatment in kitchens. Our children's hospital needs more beds, not rebranding. Meanwhile, the health minister sends out his bureaucrats to answer questions about serious health problems at Queensland Health. The health minister does not show up himself. It is obvious that Labor's health priorities are twisted. The LNP has thrown its support behind the campaign to boost the state's meningococcal vaccination program. We need more action to save lives and less focus on the names of hospitals.

Then there was the annual education report, which shows that we are not hitting any reading, writing or numeracy benchmarks. In fact, we are not even close. The report also proves the lie around front-line services, with over 20 per cent of the education department not being teachers or teacher aides. What is the education minister doing? We have seen the secret review into IPS. We now know that the union movement is throwing their rot right down the throats of children in years 10, 11 and 12 whilst the Premier and education minister support it. This was built and designed in the education minister's office. It is obvious that their priorities are wrong and it is obvious they are very out of touch.

Instead of fixing our transport, health and education services, the Labor government is intent on wasting taxpayers' money by spending \$4.6 million on overseas travel. It is not Labor's money that is being wasted; it is taxpayers' money. Taxpayers want their money spent on better schools, hospitals and police, not luxury breaks to the Bahamas and the Maldives. As Queensland debt soars to \$83 billion our focus should be on ensuring that public money is spent responsibly. The buck stops with the Premier. This Premier is meant to lead by example, but instead the Premier hides from scrutiny. It is not everyday Queenslanders that the Premier cares about. When the Premier does emerge it is for a meet and greet with a celebrity.

The Premier must stop planning her next international jaunt to chase celebrities and start tackling the problems that matter to Queenslanders right here at home. Queenslanders want answers about when their rail services will be fixed. They want answers about when their health system will improve. They want answers about when their education and student results will turn around. Importantly, Queenslanders want answers around when our police will be given the resources they need to tackle crime across this state.

When the Premier is faced with tough questions she says, 'I'm more than happy to look into that for you,' but we never hear anything else. Queenslanders are tired of the Premier looking but doing nothing. The Premier is running a government in crisis. It is dragging departments, industries, farmers and Queensland families down with it. The Premier's priorities are wrong. Labor is arrogant, secretive and out of touch with Queenslanders.