



Speech By  
**Jarrold Bleijie**


**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 October 2018

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Palaszcuk Labor Government, Young Workers Hub**

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (2.25 pm): Today we saw another bungle by the education minister—not only a bungle but also a cover-up. In July this year the education minister with the Premier said that the state Labor government had no intention at all to implement the Queensland Council of Unions Young Workers Hub—no intention. In fact, do members remember the press conference where she got so angry because the journalist had the hide to ask her about it? She stormed off after saying that she was not going to guarantee anything about this program but at the time made representations to the people of Queensland that the government knew nothing about this. It was all news to the minister, although in the afternoon she had put out three separate press releases endorsing the program, retracting from the endorsement and then semiendorsing some elements of the program. We had three different positions by the education minister in one afternoon on this union program.

Of course the education minister in the state of Queensland—this education minister—is going to support a program by the Queensland Council of Unions considering she is a former union heavyweight of the Queensland Council of Unions. It is no surprise. What was a surprise was when the education minister said she had no knowledge of this program. She said that no proposal had been put forward to the government. Not only that, on 19 July the Premier said that no proposal had been put forward to the government. As was revealed today on the ABC early in the morning, that was not the truth. It was a complete fabrication in July when the Premier and the education minister said it. Not only did the government know about the Young Workers Hub union program; it helped draft it. A senior policy adviser in the office of the education minister was consulting with the Young Workers Hub at the QCU on how to make the program better, and the minister says that she does not know anything about it!

The response—this is how those opposite treat the media and the Queensland public with such arrogance—the minister's office gave last night to the ABC journalist was that this was a junior staff member quite a long way from the minister. What are we talking—hallways and corridors? It is a senior policy adviser. If it was the Minister for State Development, I would understand that because he keeps his staff as far away as possible from him in his ivory tower. The senior policy adviser goes by the name of Giau Nguyen. This is one under the chief of staff. When the chief of staff is on holidays, the senior policy adviser acts up in the chief of staff's position. The education minister tells the media today, 'It was just a junior person. They were probably out on a limb, probably doing their own thing.' Come on! Queenslanders did not come down in the last shower. We know the minister is misleading Queenslanders. There is a whole page of emails where the minister's office is going back and forward with the Queensland Council of Unions suggesting changes to the presentation of 'Your Rights'. It even says here—

When you get to the union slide, the wording 'join a union' might come across as subtle messaging

That is not from the Queensland Council of Unions; that is from the senior policy adviser to the education minister.

The education minister would have Queenslanders believe that she knew nothing about the program. As I have said, the Premier says, 'I see nothing, I do nothing, I know nothing, I hear nothing.' This issue takes that to another level. In fact, only a few hours ago during question time, despite the fact that the Premier still says that no proposal was put forward to the government, she said that the education minister did not tell her that they had received a proposal. The Premier does not correct the record. She stays to the excuse that she gave in July this year.

The reality is that this was a proposal. If a union is corresponding directly with the senior policy adviser of a minister's office, we cannot say that that is not a proposal. Whether the members opposite like it or not, it is a proposal. The emails, which I tabled earlier today, state, 'Once you've had a look at this, let us know your suggestions. We'll change it and then get us a meeting with the department.' That is what happens when a proposal is put to the government. There is then a meeting with the minister, then with the department and then it is implemented. That is the process and that is exactly what has happened.

The government, in its arrogance of hiding behind the misleading statements that both the Premier and the education minister gave, is trying to fool the people of Queensland. Queenslanders will not be fooled. This is a union proposal that is supported by a union education minister.

*(Time expired)*