




Speech By
Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

Record of Proceedings, 20 March 2018

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from 8 March (see p. 443).

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (2.57 pm), continuing: I rise to continue my contribution to the address-in-reply. I was at the point in my speech where I was turning from remarks about things in my local electorate to the work that lies ahead in my new portfolios.

Recent experiences have shown that there is indeed a need for improvement in standards in local government. It is often said that local government is the level of government closest to the community and it is politics at the most grassroots level. As such, I hope to work collaboratively with the member for Warrego and all the other members across the chamber in rebuilding the trust people have in their councils and councillors.

Without dwelling on them, I acknowledge very briefly the bills that I have recently presented to the House which are further steps on the path of local government reform aimed at restoring the community's faith in their local councils. Most councils and councillors across the state do the right thing, but more work needs to be done and will be done to restore the faith of the community in their local government and their councillors.

Furthermore, Labor values investment in regional Queensland in partnership with local councils. That will be a very large part of the work that I do as Minister for Local Government, working throughout the state with our very important 77 regional councils across the state. In relation to one of the key elements to which the Palaszczuk government has been strongly committed and has delivered right across regional Queensland, I have had nothing but very good reactions from mayors and councils across the state about our \$400 million extended Works for Queensland package. It is something that is delivering in communities across the length and breadth of the state. I acknowledge and thank those local members from both sides of the House who welcomed me into their communities when I attended the opening of Works for Queensland projects or indeed visited those projects to see how they are progressing. I also thank my colleagues who accepted the opportunity to represent me at the opening of those facilities right across the state.

Turning now to my portfolio as Minister for Racing, I look forward to learning more about the great racing industry here in this state. I am not from a racing background, I do not have a pedigree, pardon the pun—there are so many in this field—but I hope that I am a fast learner and can be trained well. There are certainly plenty of trainers out there wanting to do the training! I am enjoying that experience and that process. I know that there are a few enthusiastic punters and otherwise engaged members of this parliament who I am sure will continue to provide me with good counsel, if not necessarily good advice.

As I travel around the state, I particularly see the fantastic reception and support for the fruits of the Palaszczuk government's \$70 million country racing package. That is certainly delivering for the industry and for those country and community races that are so much a part of the heritage and community that makes Queensland the great, diverse, engaging and beautiful state that it is. These were matters that happened before I came to the portfolio, but this package has permitted the recommencement of the Deagon race day on 8 July. I encourage all members to be part of that experience of being part of a country-style race day but a bit closer to the city than otherwise people might be familiar. I welcome members from across the chamber to join me on that day.

In that role as Minister for Racing, I had the opportunity to meet with trainers, breeders, owners and representatives from the wagering industry to talk about their views on the industry and how it can go forward. I have been to thoroughbred race days in Thangool and Townsville and I have been to the Ipswich greyhound races. As well as visiting some of the major events in our great South-East Queensland facilities, I look forward to visiting the straight track at Capalaba with the member for Capalaba at some stage soon to ensure that the dogs are running straight and true.

Shortly, I will be with the member for Nanango at the races. In this regard, I have received invaluable advice from staff of Racing Queensland, from the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission and, indeed, the relevant staff within the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs. I thank all officers from those agencies for their generosity, their advice to me so far and their ongoing hard work.

Indeed, on the weekend I was on the Gold Coast at the commencement of the Magic Millions March sales that are focused on Queensland horses. I was there with the shadow minister, the member for Surfers Paradise and, in the same way that I mentioned working with the member for Warrego in relation to local government matters, I want to work with the shadow minister for racing, the member for Surfers Paradise, in this area and also in his role as shadow minister for multicultural affairs.

On this side of the House, as demonstrated by the Palaszczuk government's commitment to establishing the Multicultural Recognition Act and by the establishment of the Queensland Multicultural Charter, we have a great commitment to the multicultural and diverse nature of our state. That element of my portfolio is something for which I have a great passion. I know that we are genuinely strengthened as a community by the diversity of people who live right throughout the length and breadth of our state who come from a diversity of backgrounds. On the weekend we celebrated that with St Patrick's Day, but we have also celebrated it—

Mr Healy interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Cairns, who is a proud descendant of passengers on the *Erin*. I will not make references about calling people leprechauns. I think the shadow minister might have done that at a function on Friday night and it did not go down very well. I will highlight how important it is for us all to engage in and support the diversity of events. I know that members of this House have represented me at a range of events, but it has been wonderful to be at a range of events that celebrate so far the diversity of our state, including the Indian, Chinese, Sri Lankan, Vietnamese and many more communities, and there will be more to come. If my waistline survives that, it will be all the better for us all.

It truly is one of the measures of the nature of the modernised Queensland that we now enjoy, the modernised Queensland that is a result of successive Labor governments in this state that have embraced, welcomed and changed the nature of this state over the past not quite 30 years for the better. I see myself and the Australian Labor Party in this place as part of that great broad project of modernising this state and ensuring that we truly take our place in the 21st century and, in fact, truly took our place in the latter part of the 20th century. I look forward to the 56th Parliament being a continuation of that process.

I note that, when I was appointed Minister for Local Government and Minister for Racing, a number of people said that I had Russ Hinze's portfolio. At the time I said to them that I did not think that Russ would have quite been able to cope with the idea of a multicultural affairs element to the portfolio. I think that demonstrates the nature of the diversified, expanding and modernised Queensland of which we now are very proud.

I reach across the aisle and hope that more of those opposite join Labor in this project of modernising Queensland, of making sure that Queensland is the diversified, welcoming and expanded economic state. That is something that will certainly be very important to me. I will certainly be playing my part in this 56th Parliament in acting in the best interests of our state and in continuing the progress of modernising the state for the benefit of all. I know that a big part of that will be implementing the election commitments of the Palaszczuk government. I trust that we will have the support of this House to do that.

At the conclusion of my contribution, Mr Speaker, it is great to see you in the chair. At the outset last week I did, via your deputy, congratulate you on your election to the high office. I welcome you and once again congratulate you on election to that high office.

In conclusion, I pay tribute to the Premier and her leadership and to the whole Labor team who are part of that process and progress of modernising Queensland. I look forward to working cooperatively with members across the chamber—from the opposition, from the crossbench—in being part of that process of modernising Queensland and ensuring that we govern for the benefit of all Queenslanders.