




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2019

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Local Government

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (2.25 pm): There are over 550 elected local government representatives who, without fanfare, go about their work every day for their communities. Mayors, councillors and their staff put in blood, sweat and tears to achieve better outcomes for their councils, communities and, ultimately, the state of Queensland. These elected officials are the people whom Labor wants to replace with their own candidates after they have rigged the local government elections to suit their own political agenda. These people in local government in Queensland are being let down by Labor. The so-called Partners in Government agreement between the state and local governments has been absolutely trashed by the Palaszczuk Labor government.

The lack of genuine consultation or more like the imposition of requirements on local government in Queensland has frustrated and incensed local government. As a final resort they were obliged to mount their own campaign against the state government because of the arrogant treatment dished out to them by the Palaszczuk Labor government. They effectively told Annastacia Palaszczuk to keep her 'hands off my council'. We had this Labor government proposing changes to the law to force ratepayers' funds to be spent on candidates in local government elections.

Mr BROWN: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The member is straying into areas covered by a bill before the House at the moment.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stevens): I had not noticed that the member had mentioned matters in the bill itself. Member, just be careful in terms of anticipating debate of a bill before the House. You can talk about other matters, but not those in relation to a bill before the House.

Ms LEAHY: The Labor government was proposing changes to force ratepayers' funds to be spent on candidates in local government elections, even if the candidate were not elected.

Mr BROWN: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. That is definitely anticipating debate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have been advised that the matters are not in the bill. However, I warn the member to please stay away from matters contained in the bill.

An opposition member interjected.

Ms LEAHY: The member for Capalaba does not know what is in the bill. That is not the only example of ratepayers' funds being diverted away for Labor government whims.

The cost to run the local government election in 2020 has more than doubled since 2016. It is ratepayers who will pay for these elections. The ECQ sends the bill to councils. In fact, some councils are saying that their cost has trebled. Indications are that the total cost will increase from \$13 million in 2016 to \$27 million in 2020. Why? It is because the local government voting system is being rigged so

the ECQ has factored that in to the additional cost. That is \$14 million that will not be spent on Queensland's parks and gardens and roads, water or sewerage because the state Labor government is putting these imposts onto ratepayer.

This brings me to the essential services of water and sewerage that are delivered by local government in most communities across Queensland. It is no secret that previous Labor governments removed a billion dollars of grants and subsidy programs for Queensland councils. Is it any wonder that we now see that the amount of funds provided is far below demand. The grants and subsidies program is heavily oversubscribed.

The LGAQ warned in their media release yesterday that 'regional communities also facing a looming water infrastructure challenge both in terms of supply and treatment'. We also need to look at Labor's fifth new tax—the waste levy—and its impact on ratepayers and councils. In the *Gympie Times* we read about the rubbish decision where waste fees are headed up. The council lays the blame for the tip price hike at the state government's feet.

(Time expired)