



Speech By  
**Deb Frecklington**


**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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Record of Proceedings, 3 September 2019

**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.30 pm): My team and I are thrilled to be here in this great city of Townsville. For five years the Palaszczuk Labor government forgot this city, but I have never forgotten the people of Townsville. My first trip as Leader of the Opposition was right here to North Queensland. That was 21 months ago and since then I have been back here 14 times. I have never stopped listening to the people of North Queensland and, believe me, North Queenslanders have plenty to say. Last night, at a forum here in Townsville I spoke to victims of crime. Their stories were shocking and heartbreaking. There is no other way to describe it: crime in Townsville is simply out of control. Townsville has the highest crime rate of any city in Queensland. Under Anastacia Palaszczuk, Townsville has become the state's crime capital. It is a shame.

Crime is not the only big problem in North Queensland. For years, Townsville has been an unemployment black spot. Under this government, thousands of jobs have been lost permanently. In this region, more than 8,000 people are officially unemployed. Last year, more than 500 Townsville businesses went to the wall. Thousands of families have been forced to live on the breadline because of Labor's failed economic policies. While Townsville has been doing it tough, the biggest job creation project in North Queensland was blocked for five years by the Palaszczuk Labor government. Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton will never forget that Labor tried to destroy the Carmichael mine to keep green voters in Brisbane on side. That is how much North Queensland matters to Labor.

Labor does not care about this region—or anywhere else outside of Brisbane. As the member for Kawana said this morning, the Premier spends more time in North America than she does in North Queensland. Out of her 18 ministers, just two of them represent regional electorates. Do not expect Labor backbenchers to speak up for the regions, either. Labor has six members of parliament representing areas north of Bundaberg, but the LNP member for Burdekin makes more noise than all of them. He is like a bulldog for North Queensland and they are just Labor lap-dogs. Labor will never solve North Queensland's problems, because Labor is the problem. All North Queenslanders will hear from Labor this week is promise after promise and excuse after excuse.

The LNP's message for North Queensland is simple and straightforward: we have listened to you and we will keep listening. We have a plan for Queensland and this region is at its heart. The LNP will cut crime in Townsville, we will cut unemployment and we will cut electricity bills, too, because we believe that every community in Queensland matters. Our plan to cut crime in North Queensland is not complicated. We will put more police on the streets and we will back them up with tougher laws and longer sentences. We will make breach of bail a criminal offence instead of letting juvenile offenders terrorise our communities. We will close down the bail houses that have caused misery in Townsville suburbs and we will give North Queensland its own police helicopter within six months of the next state election. Under the LNP, there will be no hiding for criminals in Townsville.

The LNP's economic plan will create thousands of new mining jobs in the Galilee Basin. The resources industry is right behind our plan to freeze royalty rates for the next 10 years. They say that the LNP's plan will unlock mining projects right across Queensland. For the Galilee Basin—right there—there are 15,000 mining jobs in the pipeline. These jobs will not happen under the Palaszczuk government given that it is anti resources, anti regions and anti jobs. Only the LNP will get the Galilee Basin going again.

Just like the Labor Party has done nothing for regional Queenslanders, it has certainly done nothing to cut electricity bills in regional Queensland. Although competition between private electricity retailers has driven down prices for people in Brisbane, Townsville consumers have been stuck with just Ergon. The LNP's plan will introduce competition to the regions and will give Townsville consumers a choice. Our plan will bring down the average bill in the north by \$300 a year. It has worked in Brisbane and it should work for the bush as well.

Queenslanders know that the Labor Party simply will not ever cut crime, because letting offenders get away with it is the Labor way. The Premier will not even discipline her own MPs when they break every integrity rule in the book. The past six weeks have left this government's integrity in tatters. We have seen a dodgy property deal from the Deputy Premier. We have seen state government handouts for a company owned by the Premier's own chief of staff. We have seen the training minister take a secret skiing holiday with a state government contractor. We have seen the Electoral Commission investigate the member for Keppel over her dealings with a Chinese property developer.

There is no longer any doubt: Queenslanders cannot trust Labor. The Premier should have sacked her Deputy Premier and her chief of staff weeks ago but, instead, she has done nothing. This Premier is the weakest Premier that Queenslanders have ever seen. The Premier will not even reprimand MPs who show complete contempt for our anti-corruption rules. While she has been running away from the media, she has also been hiding behind the Crime and Corruption Commission. These Labor MPs have clearly breached the ministerial code of conduct and the cabinet handbook, but the Premier insists that only the Crime and Corruption Commission can judge them. The Premier has a problem, because on 23 August the chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission said that it was not his job to enforce those rules; that is the Premier's job.

**An opposition member:** No jurisdiction.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I take that interjection—no jurisdiction. Alan MacSporran did not just stop there. He said that codes of conduct are meaningless if there are no consequences for the people who break them—meaningless. Thirty years on from the Fitzgerald report, the integrity framework is at risk of becoming meaningless and all because of this Premier's weak leadership. It is time the Premier got a grip and grew a backbone. It is time the Premier released the secret audit of her chief of staff's business grant, too. Queenslanders have paid for that report and they deserve to be able to see what is in it and they deserve to know how much it cost.

It is time for the voters to see the truth about the Palaszczuk Labor government. I have some advice for the Premier—and she ought to take it on board. Queenslanders want her to stop the cover-ups and they want her to start cleaning up her government. It is time the Premier got on with the job that she was elected to do and that is work for the people of Queensland, not work for her own ministers and her own backbench.