



Speech By  
**Deb Frecklington**


**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 October 2019

**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): Towns across Queensland are on the brink of drying up. The big dry has lasted for years and farmers are calling it the worst drought in living history. Crops are being destroyed and even drinking water is hard to come by. We have seen the struggle in Stanthorpe and its surrounds where water will have to be brought in on trucks. The town faces the heartbreaking prospect of running out of water by Christmastime. The people of Stanthorpe know that every drop is precious and what little water is left must be protected, so one can imagine their disbelief when those opposite decided to let precious water from Paradise Dam spill out to sea last month.

Bundaberg is fully drought declared, but the Palaszczuk Labor government ordered 105,000 megalitres of stored water to be released. It is madness. It demonstrates the Labor government's utter incompetence when it comes to water policy and water planning. Growers were left rightfully shaking their heads because many crops are not even in the ground at this time of year. The government's statement that water should just flow and it should be free was a ridiculous promise that this minister and the Palaszczuk government made to those hardworking growers. Those opposite need to understand that water is not free; it is priceless and it must never, ever go to waste.

The Palaszczuk Labor government's justification for the release was safety, but those opposite have refused to be open and transparent about the integrity of that dam. Of course all dams must be operated safely and that is why the LNP is demanding a public parliamentary inquiry to be held into the design and construction of Paradise Dam. It is astounding that a modern dam cannot last more than 13 years. There are serious questions over the dam and those opposite must provide those answers. No more cover-ups.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Order! Member for Stafford! Member for Gregory!

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** The Bundaberg community deserves to know if this dam was designed and constructed properly, they should know exactly why the dam had to be reduced to a staggering 42 per cent and they deserve to know what the government's plan is to fix this mess. Water is everybody's business in a state like Queensland and it must be treated with respect. Thankfully, there has been some good news for the people of Stanthorpe and other Queensland towns on the Granite Belt. There is a government that they can rely on to plan for a dam that will provide water security for their future. That would be the New South Wales state government, the Berejiklian government, and the Morrison federal government. Those two governments are progressing plans for a dam on the Mole River at Tenterfield that could help droughtproof towns across the Granite Belt. It is beyond embarrassing that Queensland must depend on an infrastructure project in another state to deliver us water security. It is a disgrace and those opposite should hang their heads in shame.

When the Palaszczuk Labor government came to power it had no plan for Queensland water security. Nearly five years on it still has no plan. In fact, the Labor government is dragging water security backwards. Members on this side of the House, including the deputy, Tim Mander, joined farmers and community members in Rockhampton earlier this month following reports that Labor planned to cut the size of Rookwood Weir. What was the reason? Those opposite blamed it on the price of concrete. What a load of rot. Those opposite have not cut the length of Cross River Rail over the price of concrete, but it seems that the people of Central Queensland are going to be short-changed. Something is seriously wrong with the Palaszczuk Labor government when it can budget for its overseas travel, but cannot budget for concrete. We on this side of the House know that the Palaszczuk Labor government is simply anti regions, anti jobs and obviously anti dams.

I went to Cairns last week and stood side by side with the mayors of Mareeba and Cairns. I pledged the LNP's commitment to get Nullinga Dam shovel ready. Water security in the region would be guaranteed by Nullinga, but again those opposite have abandoned the project.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** This project was set up to fail by this anti-dams government. I will take that interjection. It was set up to fail by a dodgy government that does not understand water security for the bush.

Members on that side of the House believe that regional Queensland is not worth it. Members on this side of the House will never turn their backs on farmers and agriculture. We understand that if you have water you have jobs. That is why my team has announced a plan to droughtproof Queensland with new dams and water projects. Those opposite do not back dams, just like they do not back our plan to air-condition all state school classrooms in Queensland.

I want to thank the member for Bundaberg and the member for Burnett for their immense effort to secure air conditioning for seven local Bundaberg schools. They have been fighting for it since before they were elected. There is still a long way to go, because there are eight schools that have been left off the Palaszczuk Labor government's list. They do not care about those eight not on that list. The Annastacia Palaszczuk government is creating winners and losers when it comes to air conditioning in state schools. There are some schools, the lucky few, with air conditioning and then there are those schools without.

Term 4 began last week with record temperatures, with some places in the state hitting 40 degrees. I do not believe any students should have to swelter in those conditions. I certainly do not believe that any teachers should have to teach in those conditions. All students and all teachers deserve the same cool learning and teaching environment and that is why the LNP has committed to air-condition each and every state school classroom in Queensland. The contrast with the Labor Palaszczuk government's drip-fed announcement could not be clearer. Those opposite do not think our kids are worth it, while I and my team know our kids are worth it and we know our teachers are worth it as well because the LNP wants Queensland kids to be the smartest and the coolest in the nation.

Queenslanders also deserve a world-class health system, but under the Palaszczuk government, unfortunately, one can no longer rely on Queensland Health. If you are injured or sick or just getting out of an ambulance and into a hospital bed, that is an achievement under the Palaszczuk government.

In August, statewide ambulance ramping hit a staggering 32 per cent, which is more than double the rate when the LNP was last in office. Queensland Health has been going backwards ever since the member for Inala became Premier of this great state. There is no point blaming the flu season. There is no point blaming the increase in patient numbers. I feel for the hardworking nurses, the hardworking doctors, the hardworking paramedics and the hardworking midwives who need more help on the front line to improve patient care.

Annastacia Palaszczuk went to the last election promising better health care, but now we have a healthcare system that is in absolute crisis. Every second patient who arrives by ambulance at Logan Hospital is stuck on a stretcher for 30 minutes or more. In August, almost 50,000 patients were not seen on time at hospital emergency departments across the state. These are not just numbers on a spreadsheet. It could be your mum, it could be your dad or it could be your close family friend. The figures show that the Palaszczuk Labor government does not have a clue about how to run our hospitals. Only the LNP has a plan to get Queensland back on track.