




Speech By
Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 17 September 2019

MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

**Palaszczuk Labor Government, Education; Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships**

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (2.46 pm): When it comes to education, the Labor government is failing our students and teachers. In July we saw the government only narrowly avoid a teacher strike, which would have been the first teacher strike in a decade and caused major disruption for parents and students across the state. The recent NAPLAN results are also further conclusive proof that Labor is failing to deliver better education for hundreds of thousands of Queensland students. It is alarming that most of Queensland NAPLAN results have gone backwards on a year ago. Where was the minister? He was hiding out in Cape York instead of facing the cameras.

Hardworking teachers, deputy principals and principals are also extremely concerned that their voices are not being heard by the minister. We have seen one of the biggest changes to curriculum and assessment systems in Queensland in 28 years, yet the issues and serious concerns being communicated by our educators in Queensland schools are falling on deaf ears. Teachers and principals are telling me that the additional workload and stress is a serious problem and no-one in the Labor government is listening. I have received letters from educators, principals and teachers imploring me that this government is ignoring the credible pressure that teachers who are teaching in the senior years in Queensland are currently feeling and the changes they are experiencing.

We should be doing all we can to support our wonderful Queensland teachers, not creating an environment which has seen even the most seasoned professionals throw their hands up in frustration. We know the curriculum is overcrowded. We know we have kids now striking from school for climate change protests and no discipline happening about it. We want autonomy for schools. We will bring back independent public schools. We will make sure there are more independent public schools in Queensland because we believe in autonomy for schools and school principals. We will also air-condition every state school classroom in Queensland. Every state school classroom in Queensland will be air conditioned. At two P&C meetings I attended last week the principals actively said in front of the parent body, 'We can't wait until the LNP government is elected so our P&Cs don't have to fund raise for air conditioning in classrooms.' That is what the LNP government will do: we will listen to our teachers, we will listen to our principals and we will listen to the students and staff.

Another serious matter I want to talk about is the fact that for weeks now the Premier has been in this House saying, 'When the CCC finalises its assessments, I'm going to take strong action against the Deputy Premier.' That is what the Premier said—'Strong action. I'll do it. I will take action.' What did she do? She promoted the Deputy Premier and then flew to Switzerland!

The day she flew to Switzerland she promoted the Deputy Premier after the CCC released its findings saying essentially that what the Deputy Premier did should be a criminal offence. It might not have got up to the level of corruption, but the CCC said that what the Deputy Premier did do by failing to declare to cabinet and CBRC should be a criminal offence, and now we will see legislation in the not-too-distant future about that.

The Deputy Premier was promoted to Acting Premier whilst the Premier was jetsetting in Switzerland—that is, she has less work and the same pay. That is the punishment one gets under a Labor government when they breach the ministerial code of conduct and do not disclose serious conflicts of interest: they get promoted, they stay on the same pay and then they lose a little bit of their responsibility, which she had already lost because she had voluntarily given it up weeks before. That is the strong action that this weakest Premier in Queensland's history came up with. As members of parliament, we have serious obligations and we should honour those obligations.

The CCC's assessment and press release said that on 27 March there was a submission to the CBRC by the Deputy Premier concerning matters related to Cross River Rail and by the education minister in relation to the inner-city school. Also on 27 March, the Deputy Premier's husband signed a contract for the purchase of the Woolloongabba property. As the Deputy Premier is sitting in 1 William Street looking out the window, her husband is just across the river signing a contract for the very purchase that she should have said meant she had a potential conflict of interest in the CBRC meeting, which she did not do.

On 29 March, the CBRC met to discuss more submissions on Cross River Rail. Of course, on 29 March the text message was sent by the Deputy Premier's husband to the Deputy Premier. This morning, the Deputy Premier stood up in here and said, 'I'm a busy woman. We have a working family. That's why he didn't tell me about the purchase price.' My wife works full-time. I work full-time. If I bought a \$700,000 investment property, I could imagine what my wife—a working mum—would tell me if I did not tell her about it. Does the Deputy Premier's husband treat the Deputy Premier like some sort of chattel, that she gets only a series of information? I think that is disrespectful to the Deputy Premier. For the Deputy Premier to think that anyone believes her, it is nonsense.

(Time expired)