




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Waste

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (5.35 pm): I rise to oppose the motion moved by the LNP. Can I say, it is unbelievable to me that they are moving this motion in the first place. We would have to wonder who is advising them. I think they have been set up. Everyone knows and expects governments to spend money. The Palaszczuk government does that. It invests money in Queensland. By calling that investment a waste makes me think that those opposite are judging this government by their own standards. If they want to talk about waste, I am happy to oblige.

What we saw when the LNP were in government—and the opposition leader was very much a part of that—was a shameful waste of taxpayer dollars. By the time the 2015 state election came along, people in Ipswich were falling over themselves to get rid of the LNP—and get rid of them they did. Right across Queensland LNP members were wiped out. I remind those opposite that people have not forgotten why they did. They were all sacked.

There were plenty of reasons for that. I will remind them of a few. First of all, remember good old ‘Jet Set Jeff’, the former member for Callide. It is easy enough to forget Jeff, but not if you are a charter flight pilot. Some \$598,590 was spent on charter flights, despite the fact he lived an hour from an airport. That is how much money he spent between March 2012 and February 2015. I can think of numerous projects in my electorate that would love that amount of money. That is what I call a waste.

Who could forget the \$70 million Strong Choices slush fund which was revealed in the *Courier-Mail* a few years ago?

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Mudgeeraba, you have had a five minutes to contribute to the debate. I would hope that was enough time for you to get your points across without interjecting on other members. You are warned under the standing orders.

Ms HOWARD: I see zero investment in the Strong Choices program—just waste. The former attorney-general, the member for Kawana, is the very epitome of waste. Seriously, remember the \$10,000 worth of prisoners’ pink jumpsuits to shame bikies. What a waste.

There are plenty more examples, but I really cannot go past the member for Kawana again and his \$7.4 million blowout in the deeply flawed youth boot camp contracts—not to mention the almost 15,000 taxpayer funded helicopter flights to do a promotional video on those same deeply flawed boot camps. It is an absolute disgrace. These examples I have mentioned were nothing to do with investing in this great state. They were all about shameless self-promotion and playing punitive politics with people’s lives.

Ipswich cannot forget that under the LNP we saw a massive spike in unemployment as a direct result of the slashing and axing of government services. The LNP did not care and still do not care about creating jobs. They casually axed \$288 million from employment programs in Queensland including Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which provided jobseekers in Ipswich and right across the state with skills training and work experience to get into the workforce.

They cut massive amounts from Queensland TAFE while ignoring a shocking increase in youth unemployment under their reign. Those opposite when in government did not care about taking away vital community services like the Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service. Across Queensland, 80,000 vulnerable and disadvantaged people were accessing those advocacy services to help them stay in their homes. Also, \$21 million was cut from the West Moreton Hospital and Health Service budget by the LNP in their first term, and they sacked 84 staff.

Since 2015, more than 21,000 Queenslanders, including 1,700 Ipswich jobseekers, have found work as a direct result of participating in the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. It has directly resulted in Ipswich's youth unemployment rate dropping seven percentage points in four years. We all know in this House about the Deloitte Access Economics analysis of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program—for every \$1 of government spend there is an \$8 return to the economy. That is what I call investment. We are also investing in TAFE and schools. We are offering free TAFE to year 12 school leavers.

One of the many cuts that the LNP made during their short reign was a \$100,000 cut to the Pyjama Foundation. I am not sure whether those opposite know what the Pyjama Foundation is. Maybe they thought it was a group of first-class international flyers talking about silk pyjamas, when in fact it was a group of people—volunteers—who care for and read to vulnerable children in foster care. It is unbelievable to me that they cut that program. It is very typical of the character of the LNP.

This government is investing in the growing health needs of this state by injecting a record \$18.3 billion into health this year. I am pretty sure my constituents see that as an investment, not a waste. The LNP wasted a lot of time and money when they were in government but they invested nothing in this state. Again, I oppose the motion.