



Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 18 February 2020

MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

New Bradfield Scheme; Public Hospital Waiting Times

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.01 pm): This month's weather has been wet and wonderful. Towns like Warwick and Roma have received more rain than they did in the whole of 2019. Two weeks ago, the Darling Downs was bone dry and brown but today it is a glorious green. There has been some flooding. I applaud the work of our swift water rescue teams. The smiles on the faces at Ironpot Reef 'n' Beef on the weekend said it all. Anyone who has spent any time in regional Queensland and in those areas that have had that much needed rain can just feel it. The pressure valve has come off and has been released. But no-one should think that the drought is over. Western Queensland has not had a fraction of the rain it needs. More than 60 per cent of the state remains drought declared. Whenever this drought ends, inevitably another will follow sooner or later. Queenslanders have always known that. As this state grew, every generation of Queenslanders built dams, weirs and pipelines. We captured water because water is precious but, under the Palaszczuk Labor government, Queensland stopped building dams.

This Labor government, like the last Labor government, is anti dams and Labor has stopped building for our future. If we do not build for the future, we will not have a future. The dividing line between the LNP and Labor could not be clearer. The LNP will build the New Bradfield Scheme. The LNP will build new dams, but what will Labor do? Nothing. That is why towns like Stanthorpe have run out of water. That is not leadership. Queensland needs a government that will build for our future, create jobs and deliver a stronger economy. Queensland needs an LNP government.

The New Bradfield Scheme is a game changer for Queensland. It will create tens of thousands of jobs, give farmers the water that they need and generate enough power for 800,000 homes. The project will create a new food bowl that will be bigger than Tasmania. The potential of the New Bradfield Scheme is immense, and I want to make that potential a reality. But already the Palaszczuk Labor government is planning to stop the New Bradfield Scheme dead in its tracks. We know Labor is secretly developing proposals that will prevent any new irrigation proposals and projects west of the Great Dividing Range. The promise of new jobs and prosperity will be destroyed if this Palaszczuk Labor government gets its way.

Queenslanders do back the New Bradfield Scheme. They want a government that looks over the horizon and builds for the future, and that is what an LNP government will do. The LNP will unlock this state's potential and make Queensland an economic powerhouse once again. Instead of building new dams and backing the New Bradfield Scheme, the Palaszczuk Labor government is pulling dams down. Across the Bundaberg region, tens of thousands of people are confused and concerned about the fate of Paradise Dam. They are worried about their jobs, farms and livelihoods. All they know is that the Palaszczuk Labor government will stop at nothing to lower that dam. Labor gave no notice of its plan to start pulling down that dam. There was no public consultation and no parliamentary scrutiny.

The people of Wide Bay and Queensland deserve to know what is happening. They want to see the Building Queensland report before the spillway is demolished. They just want to know the truth. Listen to what local farmers are saying. Growcom CEO David Thomson said—

Any good faith the Minister may have built in the local community ... has now been lost. Decisions that affect the future of an entire region ... its economy and its jobs, are coming out from the State Government without consultation or explanation.

Canegrowers CEO Dan Galligan said—

We ... urge the State Government to have a transparent conversation with the community.

They both are right, and it is time the government started listening to the people of Bundaberg and Wide Bay. They deserve to be treated with respect. They deserve to know if their jobs and livelihoods are safe.

Queensland has world-class doctors, nurses and surgeons but, unfortunately, not a world-class health system under the Palaszczuk Labor government, because the Palaszczuk Labor government has the wrong priorities for the health system. Members opposite are more focussed on changing hospital names than improving patient care. Last week, the member for Mudgeeraba and I visited Ralph Jones at his Mudgeeraba home. Ralph lives in constant pain because he needs a double hip replacement. He has waited 234 days to see an orthopaedic specialist, and he is still waiting for that appointment. When he got notice from the hospital just recently, he pleaded with them just for an appointment. He has been told that he will have to wait another 500 days before he even gets to see a specialist. That is 734 days on the waiting list just so he can get to the waiting list!

Ms Grace interjected.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Member for McConnel.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member for McConnel has been here long enough to know that interjections need to be made from the seat you are sitting in.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I will look after it. Thank you, member for Clayfield. I believe that she is the Acting Leader of the House.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for McConnel, we do not need any interjections while I am making a ruling.

Mr NICHOLLS: It is very poor acting, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Ms GRACE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. You want to play games? I can play games.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Through the chair.

Ms GRACE: I take offence at those remarks and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr NICHOLLS: I withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, members. Let us get back to matters of public interest.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I can understand why those two ministers opposite are interjecting, because the truth hurts. Some 734 days on the waiting list to get to the waiting list is completely unacceptable. Unfortunately, Ralph's story is not unique.

More than 56,000 Queenslanders now are waiting for surgery in Queensland. Those patients are being failed by those opposite. Queenslanders deserve a world-class health system, and that is what the LNP will give them. The LNP will fix Queensland Health and we will put patient care first. That is the LNP's patient guarantee.

Queensland is facing major challenges. Our economy is broken. Our teachers, doctors, nurses and police desperately need more help on the front line. Queensland needs strong leadership more than ever, but instead of stepping up the Palaszczuk Labor government is tearing itself apart. Labor is now gripped by infighting and the Palaszczuk Labor government's infighting has real consequences for Queenslanders, because when Labor MPs are attacking each other they are doing nothing to tackle the fact that we have Australia's second highest unemployment rate in the nation, longer waiting times in our hospitals, failing NAPLAN results in our schools, the devastating drought in our regions and a surge in youth crime. We need a government that is focused on all of Queensland and Queenslanders, not focused on fighting each other.

Queensland needs an LNP government. On 28 March the people of Currumbin can send a powerful message to the Palaszczuk Labor government. It is their chance to say that Labor has the wrong priorities for the Gold Coast. The LNP and our outstanding candidate Laura Gerber have a plan to build a stronger economy for Currumbin. We will create higher paid jobs by fixing the M1 and guaranteeing there will be no new taxes under the LNP and we have a plan to create a stronger economy, which Queensland needs to cut the hospital waiting times and to improve our education results. A vote for Labor will only reward Labor's failures on the Gold Coast. More than 20,000 Gold Coasters are unemployed, youth crime is out of control, 7,000 people are waiting for an operation and our roads are grinding to a halt. Labor cannot solve those problems because the Palaszczuk Labor government caused those problems. The people of Currumbin need to send a strong message to this failing Palaszczuk government.