



Speech By  
**Deb Frecklington**


**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Coronavirus, Economic Response; Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): I would like to congratulate Queenslanders for the efforts they have made towards defeating coronavirus. Every Queenslander has played a role in suppressing the virus. I thank our essential workers and those who have been forced to stay at home. I thank students for the way in which they have coped with this crisis and I thank our seniors for the sacrifices they have made. Together we are beating this disease.

Unfortunately, suppressing the virus is only half the battle. The cost of coronavirus to our economy is becoming clearer by the day. Queensland's already high unemployment rate is climbing even higher. In April, almost 130,000 Queenslanders left the workforce. Many of those still in work have had their hours and incomes cut. Few Queenslanders can remember an economic crisis like this, and people are rightfully asking: how will we get through this? Now more than ever Queensland needs a government with a purpose and a plan for the future and a government that gives clear and concise messaging.

The people of Queensland have risen to the challenge of coronavirus but, unfortunately, the Palaszczuk government has not. As Queenslanders fear for the future, Labor has shown that it has no plan, no budget and no integrity either. Unlike the LNP, Labor has no plan to build a strong Queensland economy by creating more jobs. This government, in contrast to every other government in Australia, is refusing to present a full budget this year. Today all Labor has delivered is an eight-page glossy brochure. That is not a comprehensive economic plan. In the middle of this crisis Labor has been consumed by an integrity scandal that goes right to the heart of this government. Businesses are failing each and every day, but the CCC has never been busier. Queensland deserves better than this. Queensland needs a government with principles and a plan to get this state working again. Mr Deputy Speaker, 31 October this year cannot come soon enough.

The member for South Brisbane may have been the worst treasurer Labor has given Queensland—and that is surely saying something—but her time as treasurer saw Queensland suffer the worst average unemployment rate in the nation, as well as the highest number of bankruptcies and rock-bottom economic confidence—and this was before coronavirus. I will leave it to the CCC to investigate her latest integrity scandal, but her resignation does not change the fact that this was a bad government before, and it is still a bad government. Just look at the chaos that has been caused by her exit. Labor gave us three treasurers in just two days in the middle of an economic crisis. What an embarrassment to Queensland. The treasurer's resignation did nothing to resolve Labor's integrity crisis because, when it comes to Labor's integrity scandals, the member for South Brisbane is not Robinson Crusoe.

Last week we learned that the deputy director-general of the education department has also been stood aside. Text messages between the deputy director-general and the member for South Brisbane were heavily redacted before they were released to the opposition. The education minister was happy

to be in a social media video with the member for South Brisbane and the new school principal, but she was not keen on answering questions about this scandal last week—questions like: why was her department's deputy director-general texting the then deputy premier? What were they talking about that was subject to cabinet confidentiality? Why can the public not see those text messages? The minister refused to answer those questions—and the weak Premier let her do it. You cannot have integrity without accountability. Under this weak Premier, no minister is ever held to account for their actions. There is only one way to clean up the state government, and that is by electing an LNP government on 31 October this year.

Tourism is the lifeblood of places across Queensland such as Cairns, the Whitsundays, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and the Outback, but you cannot have a tourism industry without tourists, and tourists cannot come to Queensland while our borders are still closed. The Palaszczuk Labor government caused chaos when the Premier announced the border closures via Twitter back in March. The Palaszczuk government is still causing border chaos. They cannot even agree amongst themselves when the border will reopen. The Chief Health Officer says July. Then the Premier sent shockwaves through the industry when she said September. The Palaszczuk government's own roadmap says July. Businesses want and deserve clarity and certainty, but that was destroyed yesterday with the Premier's thought bubble statement—a little thought bubble once again—that borders will not open until September.

The tourism minister was reportedly shocked to learn of the Premier's timetable, and the tourism minister was not the only one in Queensland. Our entire tourism industry was shocked too. There is a slim booking window open right now and the Premier is simply trying to slam it shut. Queensland could lose millions of tourists and tens of thousands of jobs because of the chaos caused by the Premier's mixed messages. When people's jobs are on the line, the government's message must be clear and consistent. Our tourism industry cannot recover until our borders are open again. Labor's confusion and incompetence will cost jobs.

The Palaszczuk government must get its act together and give Queenslanders its final plan for reopening the borders. Is it a staged approach? Will the Premier listen to the health advice? Will the Premier take her own advice? Will the Premier listen to the tourism minister? Will the Premier listen to the tourism operators who live across the border? The Premier needs to give the industry clear and concise messaging so they can have some certainty and we can save the tourism industry in Queensland.

I want to thank our health workers for their tremendous work over the last few months. Sadly, it is clear that the correct procedures have not been followed at the Rockhampton state-run care home. The LNP immediately called for an independent inquiry into the breach of the coronavirus restrictions. Unfortunately, the Premier stood up in a press conference and had the hide to blame the nurse. Labor needs to stop blaming the nursing staff and instead focus on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the elderly residents, the staff, the patients and the nurses at the other 15 state-run care homes. Their health matters more than anything else.

Many jobs have a huge element of risk, but mining is one of the most dangerous jobs of all, as we all saw at the Grosvenor Coal Mine earlier this month. In the past 21 months, eight miners have lost their lives at Queensland mines. In the past 21 months, we have also learned that the number of mine inspections has been shamefully cut by the Palaszczuk government.

Despite eight deaths in Queensland the Labor Party has refused to hold an independent parliamentary inquiry into mine safety. The mine minister in Queensland has failed mineworkers and the mine minister in Queensland should resign. The Premier should show some leadership and act for the safety of mineworkers across Queensland. Workers in the resources sector deserve and expect the state government to ensure safety within their industry. Our resources industry and miners create wealth for Queensland; therefore, they deserve the protection of their government. Every miner should be able to go home safely when their work is done. On behalf of the LNP our thoughts and prayers go out to those five miners who were so tragically injured in that mine incident in the last couple of weeks.