




Speech By  
**Deb Frecklington**

**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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Record of Proceedings, 18 June 2020

**ELECTORAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION (ACCOUNTABILITY, INTEGRITY AND OTHER MATTERS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (12.11 pm): The LNP cannot support this bill. This bill makes a mockery of the CCC's attempt to restore integrity to the Queensland government. For almost a year now Queenslanders have seen one integrity scandal after another from the Palaszczuk government. The public's confidence in the integrity of the Palaszczuk Labor government has quite simply been destroyed. To address this, the CCC presented reforms to restore public confidence in good government, but Labor has tossed the CCC's plan in the bin.

This bill does not strengthen our anti-corruption laws. This bill will do nothing to restore integrity to this Palaszczuk government. In fact, the Palaszczuk Labor government's response will only undermine public confidence even further, and rightfully so. Let me be clear that the scandals of the last 11 months, followed by this weak and watered-down bill, have proved one thing beyond a doubt: that Queenslanders cannot trust the Palaszczuk Labor government. Queenslanders cannot trust Labor, full stop.

Just look at how Labor is trying to rig the electoral system with this bill. Last term we sat in this House and Labor went about scrapping Queensland's optional preferential voting system with just 18 minutes notice. There was no public consultation and 18 minutes notice. Then it banned property developer donations for state campaigns even though the CCC never recommended it. Why? Because Labor benefits from that at the polls. Labor does not care about fair elections; they are only interested in rigging the system. Now, just five months before the next election, they are at it again. At 9.06 pm the night before this bill was to be debated in the House we were sent 229 amendments with 100 pages. There was no public consultation, and that is Labor rigging the system to suit themselves. They have done it before—let's all remember 2011—and they are doing it again. Let me explain what these changes mean for the people out there who are listening to parliament today.

**Mrs D'Ath** interjected.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** It is interesting that the Attorney-General does not think people are listening. Let me tell her this: people do not regard the Palaszczuk government very highly at all, so I appreciate that. What these changes mean—

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition is seeking to verbal me in what I interjected with, and I take great offence and I ask that she withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Member for Nanango, the Leader of the House has taken personal offence. I ask you to withdraw.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I withdraw. What these changes will mean is that Labor and the unions can spend \$2.3 million on a single seat. What does that mean for another political party such as the Liberal National Party? We could only spend \$150,000 per seat. Labor is openly and blatantly rigging the electoral system here in Queensland.

This week we have seen the Victorian Labor government's contempt for democracy and here we have it in Queensland. The Palaszczuk Labor government can do no better. I advise Queenslanders to ignore the Palaszczuk Labor government's rhetoric. Queenslanders should judge the Palaszczuk Labor government by its actions. Let us go back to the beginning of this integrity scandal. The former deputy premier's record as treasurer was a shocker. She gave Queensland the worst unemployment rate in Australia, delivered the lowest business confidence in the nation and—

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. The Leader of the Opposition is now reflecting on the member for South Brisbane's character, which has nothing to do with this bill or the matters that lead to the—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Leader of the House. Order! Members, it may be timely to remind all members of the House of Mr Speaker's ruling earlier this week. I will read it again. It states—

Debate must be reasonable and reference to the reasons for the legislation moderate in language and temperament. I warn all members that I will not allow the debate to descend into personal attacks or pre-empt any findings by the Ethics Committee.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, this goes to the heart of the bill, which was around integrity. I am simply outlining what has gone on with the Palaszczuk Labor government's integrity scandals, but I will move on.

What Queenslanders will remember about the member for South Brisbane is the purchase of the Woolloongabba investment property. That is the member for South Brisbane's political legacy. I have never had a problem with people making a profit, but I do have a problem with people who break the laws we are all meant to follow. The former deputy premier clearly broke rule after rule after rule. The conduct looked wrong because it was wrong. No politician should be allowed to make a personal profit as a result of the decisions they make as ministers—not one. Not even the former treasurer of Queensland.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I do believe that the Leader of the Opposition is now making assertions that have no basis or founding whatsoever and I ask that they be ruled out of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Nanango, I advise that you need to be moderate in your language, temper your debate and make no personal attacks.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I am not making personal attacks; I am simply stating the facts.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock. Member for Nanango, I have made my ruling. That could be seen as a reflection on the chair. I am just giving you the warning that it may be a reflection on the chair.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I apologise. I do not wish to reflect on the chair. I move on from the integrity scandals and the failure of leadership from the Premier over the former deputy premier's conduct in this matter.

Let me move to Ipswich City Council. As I have said, the LNP cannot support this bill. However, there are some changes within the bill that I do welcome. The LNP does not oppose the local government changes which are an improvement on the existing integrity framework. These changes stem from Operation Belcarra and the scandals that have engulfed the former Labor Ipswich City Council. The proud people of Ipswich have seen their city dragged through the mud by corrupt Labor politicians. Ipswich has long been a Labor heartland, but the people of Ipswich are now questioning their loyalties, and rightly so. Congratulations to the new mayor, Teresa Harding, who is cleaning up the system.

I have many friends and family who live in Ipswich. The people of Ipswich have seen too many Labor politicians who only work for themselves instead of the local people. They have seen too many Labor politicians rip them off. Thankfully, the Ipswich City Council is now under that new leadership—non-Labor leadership. Even in Bundamba, voters are turning away from the Labor Party—a party that has failed that city for so long.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. This is not relevant to the bill and the establishment of caps for particular integrity offences.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Nanango, I will give you a bit of latitude here and allow you to continue, as long as you bring it back to the long title of the bill and weave your debate back through that please.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I am talking about local government and I am talking about elections. The fact of the matter is that the Labor Party's vote went down about 12 per cent in the recent by-election in Bundamba. That is a shocking example of the legacy of what has been going on under Labor

administration. I am sure the Ipswich City Council is now on the right path. I thank the CCC for its work in exposing and ending the corruption in local government. Unfortunately, the CCC's attempt to introduce reforms to the state government is now being thwarted by Labor. The CCC specifically recommended that the law be changed to penalise members of parliament who fail to register their interests, regardless of intent. The CCC knows that it is very difficult to prove intent in these matters, and that is precisely why it made the recommendation that it did.

The Premier and her ministers have had the nerve to claim that they are implementing the will of the Crime and Corruption Commission, but that is not the case. Do not take my word for it. Just listen to what the chairman of the CCC had to say about the Palaszczuk Labor government's reforms. He said that this bill duplicates existing laws and provides a lesser penalty so it lowers the bar rather than raises it.

This is a disgraceful and blatant subversion of what the CCC called for, and every Labor member of parliament in this House knows it. They know that the former deputy premier should have been punished for her conduct. They know that this bill will not make a blind bit of difference the next time a Labor minister breaks the ministerial code. This bill makes a mockery of the CCC's attempt to restore integrity to the Queensland government. I will not vote for this bill and nor should anyone else in this House. This cynical attempt to stymie the CCC should be called out by all parties. It should be called out by everyone who cares about the integrity of our political system. The LNP wants to take this state forward. We want to strengthen Queensland's anti-corruption laws, but the Palaszczuk Labor government wants to roll them back. Voters can only draw one conclusion from this. They simply cannot trust Labor.