



Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Record of Proceedings, 20 May 2020

MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Integrity

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (5.07 pm): I rise to speak against this motion. Unlike the member for Stafford, I am not a medical doctor, but I think we can agree that the Leader of the Opposition is suffering from relevance deprivation disorder, the main symptom of which is saying misleading, offensive and frankly silly things to try to get attention. That is what this motion was and thank you, Mr Speaker, for your intervention in amending it.

While this side of the House has devoted itself to fighting the pandemic, the opposition leader is only devoted to herself and to her own political interests. At a time when all levels of government are enjoying an unprecedented time of cooperation, those opposite come in here and play games. It is day 112 of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was the Palaszczuk government's early action that prepared us to respond effectively to the virus. We injected \$1.2 billion into public hospitals. We ordered more PPE and ventilators. We boosted testing capacity and we purchased GeneXpert machines. We employed 1,375 extra staff: doctors, nurses and paramedics.

As I have outlined to the House, initial modelling showed Queensland's death toll due to COVID could have been 30 times greater than the total number of cases we have seen. Instead, we are beginning to lift restrictions with a sensible road map based on the best health advice. Queensland's position and hold on the virus comes down to the hard work of our government and, more importantly, the work of each and every Queenslanders. They have listened to the health advice and they have stayed home. I am thankful to Queenslanders for listening to our advice and the advice of our Chief Health Officer.

I am thankful they have not listened to the advice of those opposite. Their policies have the potential to harm Queenslanders. They want to open our borders and freely allow interstate travellers who would come from areas where there is community transmission of COVID-19. Closing our borders has had a significant effect on how well Queensland has done. Victoria and New South Wales are still experiencing outbreaks. Victoria has put three aged-care homes in lockdown and had to close 12 McDonald's stores. There have also been additional cases linked to the Cedar Meats abattoir. Opening our borders as the Leader of the Opposition advocates would only put Queenslanders at risk. I was also disgusted—

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, sorry to interrupt. I am curious to ensure that you are speaking to the motion, because I do not see that there is any particular relevance, regardless of the magnitude of the current pandemic, to the motion presented to the House.

Dr MILES: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The motion goes to the integrity of the government and I am speaking to the integrity.

Mr SPEAKER: I think you will need to be a little bit more direct to those matters.

Dr MILES: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Recently, I was also disgusted to see opposition members like the members for Mudgeeraba and Surfers Paradise pushing anti-vaccination content on their social media. Vaccination is the best way to protect you and your family from preventable illness. When we have a viable vaccine for COVID, it will be truly vital to be able to return to normal. We need all members, including those members opposite, to support vaccination—not to criticise it. Frankly, those members should apologise to the Premier instead of coming in here and supporting a motion condemning her. They should come in here and apologise. Last week, the opposition leader said that every part of Queensland north of Wide Bay should have all restrictions lifted. That is how desperate she was to get a mention in the regional dailies. Just days later, Rockhampton had a potential index case which could have been catastrophic. Those opposite have never cared much about health. It is not in their DNA like it is in ours.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. With respect to the motion, the only part that relates to the Minister for Health is item (c) relating to a poll that he had undertaken in regard to the name of a hospital. I submit to you, Mr Speaker, that under standing order 118 the minister is not being relevant to the motion or any of the items contained in the motion.

Dr MILES: Mr Speaker, I am speaking to the motives of the opposition leader in moving this motion.

Mr SPEAKER: No, I think the Deputy Premier will need to come to the matters pertaining to be about standards of integrity. I really ask you to come back, otherwise I will ask you to resume your seat.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I do not need any assistance from members to my left.

Dr MILES: The point I am making is that this motion is nothing more than an attempt by the Leader of the Opposition to be relevant when she is not, to raise her profile when she has none, to retain credibility that she has lost. In doing so, I think it is appropriate to highlight in the context of a motion about integrity just how much integrity this government has had and just how much this motion represents an attempt by those opposite to get their heads on TV when they have missed seeing them on TV. That is why they are moving that motion here. It is feeble and it is offensive.

(Time expired)