




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Local Government Elections; State By-Elections; Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.16 pm): Since the last time we met here in parliament there have been local government elections and two by-elections. I put on record our congratulations to Laura Gerber, the new member for Currumbin, who had an outstanding victory in incredibly adverse conditions: a Labor Party that outspent us five to one and a personal campaign against our candidate that was one of the lowest that I have seen in recent times. Despite that, Laura Gerber, the new member for Currumbin, showed poise and demonstrated how cool, calm and collected she is as she focused on the issues that mattered to the people of the Gold Coast, which were the M1, crime and jobs. Laura Gerber will be the member for Currumbin for some time if she continues to show that commitment.

That is unlike the blow-in who was elected in Bundamba, the blow-in who came from Melbourne, who would know Carlton, Flemington and South Yarra far better than he would know Raceview and the suburbs of Bundamba. His GPS will be working overtime. He is someone who has been in that electorate for a couple of months. He needs to know that you cannot follow the AFL if you represent the seat of Bundamba. He needs to know who Allan Langer is and who the Walters brothers are because if he does not know that he will not last long in the working class seat of Bundamba.

I also congratulate Adrian Schrinner on what was an outstanding victory in the Brisbane City Council election. It was a great strategy from the Labor Party to put in Pat Condren, a person who got a lower primary vote than Rod Harding! That is how great the brainiacs on the other side of the House are.

I want to congratulate a couple of councillors with whom I have a personal connection. I congratulate Tracy Davis, the new member for McDowall and a former member of this House. I congratulate Sandy Landers, the new member for Bracken Ridge. Sandy has taken over the role of Amanda Cooper, the future state member for Aspley. I pay tribute to the former deputy mayor and division 9 councillor of the Moreton Bay Regional Council, Mike Charlton, who has given 28 years of sterling service. I also pay tribute to his replacement, Cath Tonks. She is also a friend of mine and will do a great job.

Before I finish I must mention how this government wastes money without even thinking. I refer to a decision of the Palaszczuk government to look at contributing \$200 million to a company that is 90 per cent foreign owned. That company has a \$5 billion debt. It lost \$350 million last year. It laid off 750 Queensland workers. The government would have given money to such an organisation. The multibillionaires who own the company are not silly enough to invest in it, but the Palaszczuk government is silly enough to do that. If the government had given over that \$200 million, today it would be gone. It would be lost. Queensland taxpayers would have lost that money overnight.

In her speech the opposition leader mentioned that in this state over 430,000 small businesses are not getting one cent from this government. They do not qualify for a payroll tax exemption because they do not pay payroll tax. People are contacting our electorate offices desperately searching for help. Rather than giving \$200 million to a company whose financial record in recent years is dubious at best, that money should be given to Queensland small businesses.

We do not want Virgin to fall over. We have great sympathy for the workers of Virgin. I am confident that in the future those workers and the planes will be flying. We will have to wait and see whether it is under a Virgin banner or another banner as the administrators sort out the mess. Let us not forget that Virgin emerged when Ansett collapsed. There is a market for a second airline in this state. We need it not only in this state but also in this country. Our tourism industry needs it as well. However, we should not give good money after bad—money that will go down the drain under the current administration of Virgin airlines.