




Speech By
Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2021

MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Ipsos Polling Data; Order to Table Documents

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (5.05 pm): I rise to oppose this motion. When I first saw this motion, two things came to mind and they have only been confirmed so far. First is the LNP's endless ability to blame someone else for their own failings and the second is the fact that the LNP's attitude is always 'do as I say, not as I do.'

These unprecedented times have meant that governments at all levels have had to ask their communities to do things they have never had to previously. Strong actions such as border closures and lockdowns have become essential to protecting the lives and jobs of Queenslanders from the worst effects of COVID-19. Properly communicating these important measures throughout the pandemic has been a key part of our success in tackling the virus so far. In fact, the Commonwealth government itself engages Ipsos to conduct research each and every year.

But no, the LNP think they have a smoking gun here. They think they have found out why they lost the election last year. One would think they would have done a proper review and taken time out to reflect on what happened last year, but we have not seen that yet. Was it the half-baked Bruce Highway announcements? Was it their opposition to Cross River Rail? Was it the candidates they chose? Was it their inability to put forward a case against the strong leadership of our Premier? Was it their leader calling for the borders to be opened 64 times? According to the LNP, it was none of those things; it was actually consumer sentiment research about the global pandemic. There is always someone else to blame. It is the preferences, it is the pandemic, it is the redistribution; it is always someone else or something else.

The other point that came to mind when I saw this motion was the 'do as I say, not as I do' nature of the LNP. They are pretty good at getting research of their own, obviously. I saw an article from late 2020 entitled '\$1.1m of public money used to fund Liberal-linked market research sent to pm's office'. It states—

A second major taxpayer-funded market research project about community attitudes to Covid-19 undertaken by Jim Reed, a long-term researcher for the Liberal party pollster Crosby Textor, has been handed to both the prime minister and the treasurer's political offices.

Who are Crosby Textor? Of course, those opposite know Crosby Textor very well. They were the architects of 'Operation Boring' in 2014.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order, members. Pause the clock. The mover of the motion was heard in silence and shown that respect. I would ask opposition members to afford the same respect to the speaker on their feet, otherwise I will start naming people.

Mr MELLISH: What was 'Operation Boring'? 'Operation Boring' was the operation the Queensland LNP undertook to save themselves from their own premier. An article from 2015 states—

The first step was to remove from public gaze those ministers who were seen as having offended public sensibilities: Notably, Newman's "strutting Attorney-General Jarrod Bleijie", as he was described so colourfully in The Australian newspaper. Bleijie's disappearance from the media brought jokes in the Twittersphere about Harold Holt and North Korea.

The article goes on to say—

One of the ground rules of Operation Boring was that Newman had to curb his naturally combative personal style ...

We can mark that up as a failure. They clearly did not take that advice. Of course, there was also \$70 million of taxpayer funds spent lining up Strong Choices, and some of that went to Crosby Textor as well.

In Queensland and federally, the LNP are more than happy to do research of their own, although they do it for more blatantly political reasons than they would have people think. I would strongly question the advice the Prime Minister has been getting if I were the federal government. Who gave the Prime Minister the advice to sit on his hands while every other world leader was out there securing vaccine supplies? Who advised him to not pick up the phone to the Pfizer CEO, as many other world leaders did? Who is now advising him to pick fights with state governments instead of doing his job on the vaccine and on regional quarantine? I do not know who advised him to back in Clive Palmer's High Court challenge trying to force us to open borders and let COVID into Queensland. I see the Prime Minister is threatening to do that again now.

Everyone knows that New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT would not be facing the tragedy they are currently to the extent they are if the Prime Minister had just done his job. Maybe that is the community sentiment the Prime Minister should have sought. The New South Wales government seems too obsessed with keeping their rabid base happy rather than locking down quickly. They are now in a world of hurt with over a thousand cases and multiple deaths each and every day. The community sentiment in Queensland is overwhelming: give us the vaccines and we will get people vaccinated.

With the LNP, both nationally and in Queensland, it is always two things: it is someone else's fault and 'do as I say, not as I do'. I note that the federal government has spent upwards of \$36 million on outsourcing as part of its COVID-19 response, including many payments to external consultants. I do not know what sort of advice on a vaccine rollout is being presented. The Prime Minister really just needed to pick up the phone to Pfizer overseas. Many other world leaders did it. If he had, we would not be in the situation we are in now. Those opposite are more than happy to outsource their own jobs when they want to. For that reason, I am happy to oppose the motion.