




Speech By
James Lister

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2021

MOTION

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

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (5.30 pm): When I saw that I was one of the fortunate few who had a chance to speak on this motion I was very pleased indeed because this is an open-and-shut case. Those members opposite who trot out those brazen falsehoods that the research was done for any purpose other than to give a taxpayer funded benefit to the Labor Party in the last campaign should hang their heads in shame. They drench this House in dishonour by coming in here with those falsehoods. We heard the Freudian slip from the Chief Government Whip that it was actually polling. He then very unwisely spoke about how the Labor Party had won so many seats. Juxtaposing those two things together spells out exactly what this government was about. It was a disgraceful, obscene use of \$500,000 of taxpayers money.

Mrs Gerber: Taxpayer money that could have been spent on your border community

Mr LISTER: Taxpayer money that could have been spent on my border community. I take that interjection. It is flagrantly false to say that this research was done for any other purpose. The fact that the government is resisting tabling it, resisting disclosing it to the people who paid for it—the taxpayers of Queensland—shows what a rump they really are.

Because I know that the people of Southern Downs do occasionally watch parliament, I want to tell them what \$500,000 would have bought them. It would have funded a public dentist in Inglewood for two years. This government has been pretty slow in providing us with a publicly funded dentist there. It would fund 300 kilometres of dog fencing to protect the hardworking graziers in my electorate of Southern Downs from wild dog attacks due to the poorly managed state forest and national parks that the Labor Party has. It would have purchased an extra round of the Pick Queensland bonus to make sure that the communities I represent have the workers they need to bring in the crops that feed us in this state and provide employment and prosperity for the people in the communities that I represent.

I know that the Labor government is very proud of its record in stamping out corruption. Over the years I have heard many luminaries in the Labor Party talk about the Fitzgerald report. Let us talk a little bit about misconduct and a lack of disclosure by government. Commissioner Fitzgerald says—

It is much less likely that a pattern of misconduct will occur in the Government's public administration if the political processes of public debate and opposition are allowed to operate, and the objectives of the parliamentary system are honestly pursued.

...

One of the functions of any opposition party in Parliament is to expose errors and misconduct by public officials. Unless the Opposition can discover what has happened or is happening and give consideration to events with expert assistance, it cannot expose and criticize activities and the people involved. It is effectively prevented from doing its job.

...

It is essential that the Government is not able to claim that secrecy is necessary when the only thing at risk is the exposure of a blunder or a crime.

This government is addicted to publicity. Everything it does, every bungle and every cover-up, is supported by a phalanx of busy propagandists and social media people all funded by the taxpayer. When the people in my electorate of Southern Downs are delivered propaganda and messages that have been crafted through the dishonest use of public funds to support this government's campaign at the last election they ask, 'Why are we not getting the things that we need?' The reason is because this government is not accountable to the proper electoral forces. It uses its position in government to waste taxpayers' money to improve its own electoral prospects and that is disgraceful.

When my people cannot get across the border, as the member for Mudgeeraba said before, the truck driver who cannot get across the border, the small business operators who cannot get across the border because the Labor government has bungled the exemption process, they say, 'Why are we being treated this way?' It is because this government is so smug. This government is certain it is electorally invulnerable because of the fact that it has access to Treasury and taxpayers' money and can fritter it away on its own little designs and thought bubbles and make sure it has a publicly funded propaganda unit and all the necessary research to make the most of it when the election campaigns come along.

I say to the members opposite that by coming into this House and saying they are not going to support the disclosure of this research, which the member for Capalaba has rightly said were polls and were used to win those seats, they bring dishonour into this place. The people of Queensland have a right to know what went on. If it does not suit the Premier to have her wrongdoing disclosed I am not concerned about that. We should disclose that. I urge everyone on that side of the House to at least be honest and let us have the research.