



Speech By  
**Laura Gerber**


**MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2021

**MOTION**

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

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (5.40 pm): The fact that those opposite have commissioned COVID community sentiment polling paid for by hard-earned taxpayer money while people were losing their jobs, while businesses were going to the wall and while families in my community were being ripped apart is a complete slap in the face to my Currumbin community. While we struggle on the border, the Palaszczuk Labor government decided to spend half a million dollars of hard-earned taxpayer money on public polling—and that is just the polling we know of. The actual figure may well be higher, with an additional \$74,000 of taxpayer money spent on strategic stakeholder engagement and communications advice. Conveniently, that ‘stakeholder engagement’ came just before the last state election. Nothing to see here.

Those opposite will no doubt claim that key COVID decisions are not being made because of this polling. If that is the case then there is no reason for the polling to remain a secret. This is a government that would not know the meaning of honesty and accountability. Here is an idea for you, Premier: instead of spending taxpayer money to try to get yourself re-elected, how about the Labor government spend some money supporting the community that has been asked to bear the burden of their COVID-19 restrictions, that is, the community that has been left decimated by border closures and border restrictions? How about spending some of that \$500 million on targeted relief for the border community?

The Premier claims that her government makes decisions guided by the health advice. Mind you, that health advice is not being released to the public either. If this government truly respected Queenslanders, they would release all the qualitative and quantitative results regarding their community sentiment polling. I am sure locals such as Jackson, a Tugun plumber, would like to know if COVID restrictions are being influenced by public polling. He wrote to me this week, explaining the impact of restrictions. He wrote—

Half of my work is in the Northern Rivers and now I'm unable to go to my jobs. Yet there are no relief packages for people in my position. I'm worried about how I'm supposed to pay my mortgage and bills once my savings dry up.

The truth of the matter is that this secretive and deceitful government will not release the results to Queenslanders because Labor are not honest. Labor are not accountable.

Here is what we know from documents acquired from a right-to-information request. We know that this state government has been tracking Queenslanders' sentiments on what restrictions people believe to be the most important, what activities or sectors should be prioritised in the lifting of restrictions and whether the restrictions should be lifted in regional Queensland before they are lifted in border communities such as those in South-East Queensland. This Premier and the state Labor government spent public money to track how popular their border restrictions and lockdowns are. It begs the question: why does the Premier have an issue releasing what the public thinks about COVID? It will reveal that the Premier is not making decisions based on the health advice or in the interests of economic prosperity!

My community do not trust this state Labor government and with good reason. This time last year, September 2020, the Premier flatly denied that the government was doing any secret polling on their border policy and COVID restrictions. Then just a month ago, on 10 August, it was revealed that that is exactly what the state Labor government is doing. Instead of spending half a million dollars on secret polling to get them re-elected, the Palaszczuk Labor government should have been spending that money supporting communities that are being asked to bear the burden of their border closures, communities where there are no jobs because people are complying with the COVID restrictions, communities where businesses have gone to the wall, communities where families are being torn apart by these COVID-19 restrictions. This government should be focused on ensuring border residents do not lose their livelihoods. Instead, they are focused on spending money on secret polling—polling, mind you, that they will not release to Queenslanders.

**An opposition member:** Open and accountable.

**Mrs GERBER:** Open and accountable! This is public money. At the very least, Queenslanders deserve to see what they got for their half a million dollars. Taxpayers deserve to see the results of the secret polling that they paid for. More importantly, my community deserves some targeted relief and that is what this money should have gone towards, not secret polling. Imagine what \$500,000 could have been spent on in my community to support locals and businesses.

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## PRIVILEGE

### Correction to *Record of Proceedings*, Apology



**Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (6.03 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. At the end of my contribution to the debate I said 500 million. Obviously I meant 500,000. There was no intention to mislead the House.