




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MAIWAR

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Cash for Access

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (2.48 pm): More and more Queenslanders are just plain sick of this Labor government. It is not just the polls telling us that: across the state there is the palpable sense of discontent in the air. Who is surprised when we have a lazy arrogant government that acts like it has a divine right to walk all over ordinary people? This government has prioritised property developer profits while renters suffer. They have committed billions of dollars to rebuild a stadium while schools and hospitals are underfunded. They have overridden the Human Rights Act and approved new coal and gas as though no-one would notice. They clearly hoped that no-one would notice they backflipped on their promise to stop holding cash-for-access events. They hoped they could obscure that from the public by editing their descriptions in the donation register for the ECQ. The 'Scanlon dinner'—a pretty straightforward admission that the event is about paid access to a minister—becomes the 'QLBR dinner'. Of course, 'QLBR' is the 'Queensland Labor Business Roundtable', which is the fancy name for Labor's annual \$10,000 cash-for-access subscription program.

I have said it before and I will say it again: cash for access is legalised corruption. It creates a two-tier democracy where there is one tier for big corporations and elites who can afford a dinner with the minister and one tier for the rest of Queenslanders. Cash for access means deal after deal for the big banks and property developers who are making homes more expensive in Queensland while the housing crisis gets worse. I do not think you will find a lot of renters at these QLBR dinners. It is little wonder, at that rate, that Labor still supports unlimited rent hikes.

Apparently, Labor got the QLBR idea from the LNP's corporate cash-for-access program. Theirs is a little more expensive, at \$25,000 a year. Perhaps businesses are making a calculation of the odds now: if you are betting on a favourable decision in a year's time, unfortunately you might not be wise to bet on Labor at this point. Labor seems to think it can beat the LNP by becoming them, but Queenslanders are noticing. Queenslanders see politicians flying to red carpet events, profiting off their investment properties in the inner city and cosyng up with billionaires, all while ordinary people are struggling to pay the rent. This is one of the many issues on which the opposition is hardly an opposition at all, because when it comes to cash for access they are absolutely on the same page.

Renters are becoming increasingly aware that the major party politicians and those at their cash-for-access meetings are the reason they are facing another rent increase and choosing between school fees and groceries. They are looking for someone who will actually stand up for them. The Greens have proven that we will. We have done that with the balance of power at the federal level and we will do it if we are in that position after the next state election. We do not have to worry about selling tickets to cash-for-access fundraisers. We do not take corporate donations, because we do not want to represent corporations. We will not let Labor get away with screwing over renters with its dodgy cash-for-access meetings or its new coalmines. Queenslanders are sick of it and we are, too.