

HON. ANNASTACIA PALASZCZUK MP

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

MEMBER FOR INALA

PO Box 15057, City East QLD 4002

reception@opposition.qld.gov.au (07) 3838 6767



C/15/7924

5 February 2015

Mr Peter Wellington MP
Member for Nicklin
Parliament House
Cnr of George and Alice Streets
Brisbane, QLD 4000

Dear Mr Wellington

I refer to our discussions yesterday and am pleased to provide to you with further information about Queensland Labor's position on various issues. I also wish to highlight that Labor, which has won the majority of seats in the 55th Parliament, is the only party that can offer stability in government for the next parliamentary term. Further, Labor was the only party to go to the 2015 election with a fully costed plan to pay down debt, stimulate economic growth and restore frontline services without selling assets.

Opposition to asset sales

Since the 2012 State election, Queensland Labor has consistently voiced our opposition to the sale of government-owned corporations. Labor's opposition to asset sales remains resolute.

Integrity and accountability

Labor has made a commitment to principles of integrity and accountability and, in particular, has made a commitment to what have been referred to as the 'Fitzgerald Principles'. The use of urgency motions to force Bills through the Parliament, bypassing proper consideration in the committee system was a hallmark of the Newman LNP Government. Labor commits, as a principle, to not use urgency motions to bypass or truncate the committee system. Any deviation from this commitment will be negotiated with the cross-bench members of Parliament.

Electoral reform

Labor has consistently committed to reform of the electoral donation threshold laws. A Labor Government will reintroduce the \$1000 disclosure threshold for electoral donations introduced by the previous Labor Government. Further, in relation to real-time disclosure of donations, Labor will work with the Electoral Commission of Queensland and the other parties to develop a real-time online system of disclosure of electoral donations.

Crime and Corruption Commission

Labor has consistently registered our significant concerns with the LNP Government's abuse of acting arrangements for the chair of the anti-corruption watchdog. Labor has also called for the acting Chairperson to stand down from the position pending the finalisation of

the police investigation into his answers to the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee. Labor will, as a matter of priority, advertise the position of Chairperson in order to secure a permanent appointment as soon as possible.

Committee of the Legislative Assembly

Labor will amend section 81 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* to ensure that the membership of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly includes a member of the Parliament from the cross benches.

Public service

As previously mentioned, Labor has committed to the Fitzgerald Principles. This includes a commitment to make all decisions and take all actions, including public appointments, in the public interest without regard to personal, party political or other immaterial considerations. This means that all public service appointments will be made on merit. In accordance with this commitment, Labor has pledged that all appointments of directors-general of government agencies will be made on merit.

Labor will review all contestability processes within Queensland Health and the Hospital and Health Services.

Previously in government, Labor had a policy of employment security and no-contracting-out provisions. Labor will restore this policy.

Commission of Inquiry into Organised Crime

Labor has clearly stated its commitment to establishing a Commission of Inquiry into Organised Crime. This inquiry will investigate organised crime networks, which can be highly sophisticated, well-resourced and have significant links to overseas crime syndicates. Labor will also establish a high-level taskforce including the Queensland Police Service, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, the Bar Association, the Law Society and the Police Union to conduct an immediate review into the LNP's unworkable laws. The taskforce – which will review the LNP's current laws, which have not resulted in one single conviction – is expected to complete its work by the end of 2015.

Inquiry into political donations

Once the new independent chair of the anti-corruption watchdog is appointed, Labor will hold a public inquiry into links, if any, between donations to political parties and the awarding of tenders, contracts and approvals. The anti-corruption watchdog has the powers of a standing Royal Commission and will be able to thoroughly investigate these issues.

Revitalising Community Cabinets

Labor is committed to revitalising Community Cabinet meetings. This includes our well-publicised support for the principle that Community Cabinet meetings are open to the public and that the Premier and Ministers can be questioned directly by members of the public.

Support for independent members

Consistent with previous arrangements, Labor recognises the need for proper resourcing for independent members of Parliament in minority governments. This includes an extra staff member in an independent MP's electorate office and a policy adviser based at Parliament House in Brisbane. Further, the Premier's Office will ensure the independent member can access key briefings from the public service as required.

Support for larger electorates

Labor acknowledges the challenges faced by members of Parliament representing large electorates. Therefore, Labor will seek a review of travel allowances for MPs from Band 3 electorates by the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal.

Rights of Queenslanders

During the 54th Parliament, Labor did not consider the question of the possible adoption of a Bill of Rights in Queensland. This was left as a matter for Labor MPs to consider during the 55th Parliament. Labor will seek advice from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General regarding the issues relating to a possible Bill of Rights in Queensland. This advice will be published to allow public discussion on the matter.

Rights to object and appeal

As you would be aware, in opposition Labor vehemently opposed the removal of objection and appeal rights from the *Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Bill 2014* and the broadening of the awarding of costs for community litigants appealing planning decisions in the Planning and Environment Court. Labor in government will restore the rights of communities, residents and individuals to object to developments without the prospect of harsh financial penalties.

New Acland Mine

Labor has stated publicly its concerns about the process used to approve stage 3 of the New Acland Mine, particularly the approval of the environmental impact statement just six days before Christmas in 2014. Labor will scrutinise the approval processes for this project and the impacts of this mine on local communities.

Review of subcontractor payment laws

Labor recognises the imbalance of power that exists within the construction industry, with subcontractors being disadvantaged. Labor has serious reservations about changes made by the Newman LNP Government to the Building and Construction Industry Payment Act in 2014. A future Labor Government will conduct a wide-ranging review of security-of-payment laws. This review will involve detailed and comprehensive consultation with stakeholders in the construction industry, including the Subcontractors' Alliance.

Dumping of dredge spoil

Labor is committed to stopping the dumping of dredge spoil on the Caley Valley wetlands near Abbot Point.

Labor's position on several local issues relating to the Sunshine Coast in general and the Nicklin electorate in particular is as follows.

Road maintenance contracts

Labor opposed the LNP Government's dismantling of its road construction arm, Roadtek, in south-east Queensland. Labor will review the awarding of road maintenance contracts, particularly in relation to the Sunshine Coast area, and make local jobs a priority.

Infrastructure charges

Labor is committed to the equitable allocation of responsibility for infrastructure charges, particularly in relation to Caloundra South. Labor will ensure a fair outcome with regards to infrastructure agreements for this development and minimise the flow-on costs to other ratepayers.

Halls Creek

Labor is concerned about the proposed Halls Creek development and will ensure the Beerwah East site is retained in the South-East Queensland Regional Plan as the identified growth area in the southern Sunshine Coast corridor.

North Coast rail line

Labor acknowledges that the LNP's commitment to duplication of the North Coast rail line relied on asset sales, which have been rejected by the people of Queensland. Labor has not made a commitment to duplicate the North Coast rail line either before or during the 2015 election campaign. Under a Labor Government, Building Queensland will conduct a cost-benefit analysis of large infrastructure projects such as this one. Projects that pass this assessment would proceed and be prioritised based on need. Should the Building Queensland assessment be favourable, Labor will liaise with the Federal Government in relation to funding for the project.

Nambour rail station

It is noted that the LNP Government reprioritised funding for Nambour rail station's upgrade to allow disability access in 2012. Labor will reinstate this upgrade as a priority project. Further, Labor will ensure the car park upgrade is completed.

Nambour Hospital parking

Labor acknowledges issues associated with parking at Nambour Hospital for both staff and visitors. As such, Labor will conduct a review of these issues to determine a solution.

Conclusion

Queensland Labor shares your concerns regarding the stability of the Queensland Government, and the erosion of integrity and accountability measures over the past three years.

I am committed to restoring integrity and accountability to the Queensland Government. Further, any government I lead will be focussed on consensus and consultation, rather than the division of the past three years.

Yours sincerely

Annastacia Palaszczuk MP
Leader of the Opposition