

~~The overall policy strategy is in the honourable Treasurer's portfolio to bring back the concessional rate of stamp duty for a principal place of residence. It was one of the most shameful decisions that I saw during the last three years where the Labor opposition in government took that right away from Queenslanders. We used to be the state which wanted investment. We used to be the state which called for investment, but the Labor Party strangled it. Its answer at the time was, 'We want to be like all the other states.' I can tell honourable members that I do not want Queensland to be the basket case economy which Labor drove New South Wales to, or other southern states. We want to be the state of investment. We want to be the envy of all other states of Australia. To do that, we have to get Queensland back on track. I am proud to be part of a team led by a Premier who is a can-do man and a can-do ministerial and backbench team where we will do just that.~~

~~(Time expired)~~

~~Woombye, Fixed Speed Camera~~

~~**Mr WELLINGTON:** Madam Speaker, congratulations on your appointment to the position of Speaker. My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, and I ask: will the Minister for Main Roads follow through with the previous main roads minister's decision to have a fixed camera installed at the Nambour Connection Road intersection with Blackall Street, Woombye for the purpose of improving the safety of this intersection?~~

~~**Mr EMERSON:** I thank the member for Nicklin for his question. Road safety is a very important issue for all of us in this chamber. That is why the LNP committed to a whole series of initiatives, not just on the Bruce Highway and making that a safer road. As we know, the RACQ has said that, if we do not spend more money on the Bruce Highway over the next 10 years, we will see between 300 and 400 fatalities on that road over the next 10 years. That is why it is very important that we make that commitment.~~

~~With regard to Roads to Resources, that is about improving the condition of those roads which are affected in the mining sector. That is why the LNP will commit another \$285 million over the next four years to look after those roads and then another \$100 million every year after that to improve local areas whose roads have been impacted by that great mining sector. We have also made a significant commitment to road safety in terms of flashing school zones.~~

~~In terms of all the roads across Queensland, clearly we are determined to work with local communities where we can in difficult financial situations, because let us not forget that the Labor Party left this state in a very dire fiscal position. As the Treasurer and Premier have indicated, we are heading towards \$85 billion of debt, a \$2.8 billion deficit and \$100 million a week in interest on that debt. Imagine going back to your communities and saying, 'This week I have an extra \$100 million for your community to work in your area.' Unfortunately, because of the debt, because of the deficit, we cannot afford to do everything, but I can assure the member for Nicklin that we will be working with local communities to provide infrastructure where we can afford it and where it is necessary.~~

~~**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! As question time started two minutes early, the time for questions has expired.~~

~~MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS~~

~~Further Answer to Question; Public Service~~


~~**Hon. RM BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts) (5.28 pm), by leave: In my response to the question asked by the member for South Brisbane, I stated that the number of front-line staff in my department was 3,900. In fact, that is the total number of all of the staff currently employed in my department. With the amalgamation of several agencies, my department, I am advised, is still determining the number of front-line staff.~~

~~**Ms Trad:** So you don't know.~~

~~**Ms BATES:** You didn't know. You couldn't answer the question when you were asked it when you were in government.~~

PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (3.29 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Constitution of Queensland 2001 and the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 for particular purposes, and to make consequential amendments of other acts as stated in the schedule. I table the bill and the explanatory notes.

Tabled paper: Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill.

Tabled paper: Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill, explanatory notes.

I am pleased to introduce the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012. The bill has two major purposes. The first purpose is to provide formulae in the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to determine the size of membership and balance between government and non-government members on the parliament's portfolio committees, depending on the composition of the Legislative Assembly at any given time. The second purpose is to return dignity and prestige to the office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly by including the Speaker in the deliberations of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, particularly with respect to the management of the parliament and the Parliamentary Service.

Following the state election the government received advice from the Clerk of the Parliament about the parliament's committee system. In essence, the Clerk's advice contended that the composition of the parliament decided upon by the electors of Queensland dictated that the number of members and the balance of numbers between government and non-government members on the portfolio committees should change so that they could remain workable and function practically in the new parliament.

The Clerk also proposed that certain formulae should be included in the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001. These formulae will determine the size of membership and balance between government and non-government members on the portfolio committees depending on the political composition of the Legislative Assembly at any given time. The formulae would also remove the need for the parliament to revisit the act immediately after each election if the altered composition of the parliament necessitated change. The government has accepted the Clerk's advice on these matters as providing a sensible and practical way forward.

The bill provides four separate formulae to determine the membership and operation of portfolio committees. These formulae cover all circumstances within which the Assembly could find itself—from the current circumstance within which non-government members comprise less than 15 per cent of the membership of the Assembly up to the circumstances of a minority government within which at least 50 per cent of the membership of the Assembly comprised non-government members.

Historically, the number of government and non-government members on the Queensland parliament's committees has largely reflected the political composition of the parliament at that time. This is also in line with a 1992 recommendation of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission. The formula to operate in the current parliament provides that each portfolio committee will consist of eight members, with six members being nominated by the newly named Manager of Government Business and two members being nominated by the Leader of the Opposition. The chair will be the member of the committee nominated as chair by the Manager of Government Business, and a quorum at a meeting will be five members including at least one non-government member.

The government supported the establishment of the portfolio committee system in 2011 when in opposition and supports the retention of the system now in government. There were seven portfolio committees in the last parliament and there will be seven portfolio committees in the new parliament, with their roles and powers unchanged. However, as required by the act, the portfolio committees will be restructured with different names and different individual areas of responsibility in some cases, given the changes to the administrative arrangements of government which my government put in place following the election.

The clearer lines of ministerial responsibility implemented by my government, inherent in having each government department responsible to a single minister, will enable the oversight responsibilities of the portfolio committees to be much clearer in the new parliament—and isn't that a breath of fresh air? Ministers will be responsible to a single committee rather than having their responsibilities split between different committees as was the case under the flawed, unworkable and frankly incompetent administrative arrangements of the former government. The portfolio committees serve an important function in reviewing bills and scrutinising the other actions of government. The changes outlined in the bill will enable the portfolio committees to effectively operate in the new parliament.

In 2011, the parliament established a Committee of the Legislative Assembly comprising three government members and three non-government members. The CLA was given a wide array of responsibilities including:

- the ethical conduct of members, except for the hearing of complaints which are handled by the Ethics Committee or the Assembly as a whole;
- parliamentary powers, rights and immunities;
- the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly, that is, the standing orders;
- management of the Parliamentary Service, for example, oversight of the parliament's budget, facilities management for parliamentary committees, maintenance of the parliamentary buildings including electorate offices, and policies for the management of the parliament;

- monitoring and reviewing the business of the Legislative Assembly to aim for the effective discharge of parliamentary business; and
- monitoring and reviewing the business of committees, particularly the referral of bills to committees and, where appropriate, varying the time for committees to report on bills or varying the committee responsible for a bill.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as you are aware, the Speaker's management and administrative functions with respect to the Parliamentary Service were transferred to the CLA upon its establishment in 2011. Furthermore, with the approval of the CLA, several of these functions were also transferred to the Clerk in the Clerk's capacity as chief executive of the Parliamentary Service. During the debate of the relevant legislation in 2011, the then opposition strongly supported an amendment which would have included the Speaker on the CLA. However, sadly, the amendment was not supported by the former government. Consequently, the position of Speaker was not included as a member of the CLA by the parliament, except for when the CLA was dealing with a matter relating to standing orders.

The government believes that the prestige and importance of the position of Speaker is central to the operation of the parliament. Therefore, the bill provides for the position of Speaker to be included on the CLA for all of its areas of responsibility as a member and furthermore as chairman. The government does, however, see the benefit in retaining the CLA, as it provides members with a greater level of involvement in the management and administration of the parliament. All officeholders presently included as members of the CLA will continue serving in that capacity, providing non-government members with significant involvement in the running of the parliament and the Parliamentary Service.

The bill provides that, while the Speaker is a member and chairman of the CLA and will be able to exercise key input into the deliberations of the CLA, the Speaker will not have a deliberative vote at CLA meetings, except in certain circumstances. These circumstances include questions relating to a matter on which the Speaker must be consulted under section 6(3) of the Parliamentary Service Act 1988—for instance, the budget and personal staffing for the Speaker's office or a matter affecting the Legislative Assembly chamber, such as capital works. The bill also retains the deliberative vote that the Speaker is currently provided with under the act when the CLA is considering matters relating to the standing orders of the parliament.

032 The current principle of bipartisanship on the CLA will remain, as the chairman will continue to not have a casting vote if a vote is tied at a CLA meeting. This is an important element of the CLA, in that neither the three government members nor the three non-government members voting as a bloc can control CLA outcomes. Any matter that cannot be decided by a majority vote of the CLA will be referred back to the Legislative Assembly as a whole to debate and decide, and these debates will of course be presided over by the Speaker.

The bill provides that the Manager of Government Business is responsible for calling CLA meetings and setting the agenda for the meetings. This is a similar process to that which is followed for the Legislative Assembly as a whole—that is, the Manager of Government Business informs members of parliamentary sitting weeks and oversights the order of business on the *Notice Paper*. The bill also includes amendments to the Constitution of Queensland 2001—the Constitution—and other relevant legislation to formally alter the title of the position 'parliamentary secretary' to that of 'assistant minister'. The government is of the view that the title 'assistant minister' is more reflective of the role and duties of this position than the title of 'parliamentary secretary' and that it is easier for people to understand. This is particularly important as I expect assistant ministers to be assisting and working alongside cabinet ministers to deliver quality outcomes for the people of Queensland. The bill provides that the 11 members appointed by the Governor as parliamentary secretaries on 12 April 2012 shall continue as assistant ministers. The bill also inserts a provision into the Constitution to remove any doubt, if any exists, that an assistant minister is not a minister of the state—that is, an assistant minister is not a cabinet minister.

As I alluded to earlier, the bill also provides for the creation of the new parliamentary position of 'Manager of Government Business' to replace the position of 'Leader of the House'. Similar to the government's view with respect to the positions of assistant minister and parliamentary secretary, the government believes that the title 'Manager of Government Business' is more reflective of the role and duties of this position. The bill also makes provision for the new parliamentary positions of Manager of Government Business, Chief Government Whip and Senior Government Whip to be added to the list of office holders in the Legislative Assembly who are entitled to receive an additional salary. The amount of the additional salaries to be paid to these office holders will be fixed by the Governor in Council and will be published in the *Queensland Government Gazette* and the *Members' Entitlements Handbook*. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading



Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (3.42 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

~~Declared Urgent; Allocation of Time Limit Order~~



Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove LNP) (Premier) (3.42 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

~~That under the provisions of standing order 137 the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill be declared an urgent bill to enable the bill to be passed through its remaining stages at this day's sitting.~~

~~Division: Question put That the motion be agreed to.~~

AYES, 77—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Judge, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbrook, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Johnson, Menkens, Sorensen

NOES, 9—Byrne, Katter, Knuth, Mulherin, Palaszczyk, Pitt, Trad. Tellers: Miller, Scott

~~Resolved in the affirmative.~~

~~Debate, on motion of Ms Palaszczyk, adjourned.~~

~~TREASURY (COST OF LIVING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL~~

~~Introduction~~



Hon. TJ NICHOLLS (Clayfield LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (3.51 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, can I congratulate you on your appointment as Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees. I present a bill for an act to amend the Building Act 1975, the Carers (Recognition) Act 2008, the Duties Act 2001, the Electricity Act 1994, the Payroll Tax Act 1971, the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000, the Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997 and for other purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes.

Tabled paper: Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012.

Tabled paper: Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, explanatory notes.

The Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 amends legislation to give effect to a number of the government's election commitments, as we have spoken about earlier today. Specifically, it reinstates the transfer duty home concession; it increases the payroll tax exemption threshold; it freezes the Tariff 11 electricity tariff prices for one year; it also facilitates the establishment of the Office of Best Practice Regulation; and it removes the requirement for sustainability declarations, as just mentioned by the Attorney General and Minister for Justice.

The bill also includes an amendment to the Carers (Recognition) Act 2008 to streamline the information included in agency annual reports, with the aim of producing further agency savings. The Bill amends the Duties Act 2001 and the Payroll Tax Act 1971 to give effect to the election commitments to lower the cost of living for Queenslanders and reduce the payroll tax on small and medium sized businesses.

The government is determined to implement its election commitments unlike those opposite who, when they campaign, promise one thing and then in government do and say the opposite. Members will remember the election in which Labor campaigned on asset sales, the removal of the fuel subsidy and the introduction of a waste tax. They will not remember it, because it never happened. We will deliver what we promised and this legislation is the start.

This bill delivers on our promises to lower the cost of living for families by reinstating the principal place of residence concessional rate of transfer duty for the purchase of a person's home. The concession provides a one per cent rate of transfer duty to the first \$350,000 of the consideration or value of the home, with duty at the general rates applying to any remaining part of the value of the home. The previous home concession was removed on 1 August 2011 by the Labor Party and the general transfer duty rates and the phasing out point for the first home concession were amended at the same time. To fully reinstate the previous position, the Duties Act 2001 amendments also reinstate the transfer duty rate structure and the first home concession as it existed before 1 August 2011.

The former government's Building Boost strategy was a complete and utter failure. It placed a tax on the family home and did not increase the number of new dwellings being built in Queensland. In fact, the then government spent hundreds of thousands of dollars writing to residents in New South Wales and Victoria and over \$1.4 million in advertising a program that so far has failed to meet a 50 per cent take up rate.