

David C. Little

15th May 2015.

Members of the Finance and Administration Committee

I am a full time Medical Practitioner working in Queensland Health.

I write to make a submission on the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.

I urge the committee to recommend passage of this bill without delay to ensure that the rights of public servants and local government workers are restored to them.

The Newman LNP government was elected in 2012 having made clear promises to respect rights at work and the collective bargaining framework. The government broke these commitments and removed protections for job security as well as many other basic rights, amending legislation often late at night with no warning. Thousands of workers and their families in Queensland suffered as a result of the removal of these protections, which directly caused the loss of over 20,000 jobs in the last three years.

The right to organise collectively to achieve better working rights and conditions is a basic human right. The Newman government undemocratically curtailed this right and as a result lost the 2015 Queensland election. At the election a majority of Queenslanders supported parties and candidates who advocated a restoration of these basic rights for workers and for a restoration of certainty in our state and local government services.

The consequences of the Newman LNP policy and laws on my workplace were dire. A number of my colleagues left the public hospital system as a direct consequence of the changes to the law, which in particular, led to so called "individual contracts", which are not individual, and loss of direct access to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission in the event of a dispute. There have been

dismissals of good clinicians for spurious reasons that would not have occurred with the previous legislation. Our ability to truly advocate for our patients, without fear of recrimination, has been lost.

There are presently more doctors trained in my particular specialty than there are jobs and yet throughout the State there are unfilled Public Hospital positions in that particular specialty. In my department there are three unfilled positions. They have been advertised, applicants applied, interviews took place, and positions offered. They were refused because the contracts that were provided were not sufficient to secure the applicants agreement. The department after one year is still short by three substantive positions with no clear end in sight.

When considered across the State this means that Public Hospitals are unable to work at full capacity because of a shortfall in the numbers of crucial staff. This impacts directly on patients, the numbers treated, the ease of access and the quality of their treatment from stretched resources.

I am concerned by reports that the Paluszczuk Labor Government is not going to repeal the High Income Guarantee Contracts (HIGC) provisions or restore direct access to the QIRC.

It is not an unreasonable demand that the Bill be redrafted to reverse the mandatory aspects of the High Income Guarantee Contracts provisions, thereby allowing senior doctors to have access to collective bargaining and to employment protections such as access to the QIRC in circumstances of unfair dismissal.

The legislation brought in by the Newman LNP government needs to be fully repealed in order for confidence in Public Hospital conditions of service to begin to return.

Please respect the voice of Queenslanders and the rights of workers and vote to restore fairness by supporting this bill.

Yours sincerely,

David C. Little

MB ChB FCARCSI FRCA Grad Cert Health Man