



Speech by

Mr SANTO SANTORO

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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PUBLIC SECTOR CRONYISM

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—LP) (11.50 a.m.): I acknowledge in the public gallery the presence of the hardworking, well-behaved and conscientious students from the Eagle Junction State School. That school is within my electorate of Clayfield and is one of the finest in Queensland.

I have an admission to make to the House. When I last spoke on Labor Party cronyism, I inadvertently gave misleading information to the Parliament and for that I wish to apologise. I informed the House that there were seven chief executives appointed by this Government without their positions being advertised and without a selection panel being convened. I suggested that there were seven appointments to top jobs in the Queensland Public Service that did not go through a merit and equity selection process, and with remuneration packages ranging from \$198,392 to \$227,391. I was wrong, and I wish to thank the Premier for correcting me. There have not been seven such CEO appointments. In fact, to this point in time there have been 11 such appointments. That is right: 11.

In an answer to a question on notice in the Estimates hearings, the Premier disclosed that 11 CEOs have been directly appointed without a merit and equity selection process. The appointees as disclosed by the Premier are Marg O'Donnell, Terry Moran, Bob Marshman, Barry Carbon, Ken Smith, Jane Macdonnell, Glyn Davis, Ross Rolfe, David Williams, Gerard Bradley and Brian Head. I will save for another time the information that I have on some of those individuals. I intend to focus my comments on the man in the top job in the Public Service, Glyn Davis.

Today I do not intend to make any comments about Jane Macdonnell, the chief executive officer of the Department of Justice, despite the revelations during the Estimates hearings of her obtaining a \$2,000 plus cash-in-

hand advantage from private air travel arrangements or that the taxpayers have paid more than \$4,000 to hire furniture for her home. I will not even deal with her blatant misuse of departmental email facilities to attempt to solicit staff to assist in her planned private litigation against the media for fairly reporting the Estimates proceedings. All I say is that the standard of conduct engaged in by Ms Macdonnell speaks for itself, and I will let others judge her. I do not want to unduly provoke the thin-skinned, second-rate thespian member for Yeronga into yet another reading to the House from his well-used paperback book of Shakespearian quotations. One ham performance per session is about all most of us can take.

I think that the public needs to know a little about how Dr Glyn Davis, the prime meritless appointment of the Beattie Government, is operating in the Premier's Department. Davis is a well-known Griffith University academic who first arrived on the Queensland political stage with the Goss Government as the Commissioner for Equity in the inequitable Public Sector Management Commission. He ended up as the Director-General of the Office of Cabinet in the dying days of the Goss Government and then retreated to academia, awaiting the return of his Labor mates so he could again pontificate in the Executive Building at taxpayers' expense. He is back again and I must say that he is a prime example of how the Beattie Government is operating.

Dr Davis has achieved next to nothing, he has wasted significant amounts of public money and he has been hell bent on looking after his mates. If his record under Wayne Goss makes the Invisible Man look like a Ken Done painting, the same cannot be said for his present performance. Firstly, I will deal with his

extravagant use of taxpayers' funds, and I remind honourable members that this is the same department that our so-called frugal Premier is responsible for. I also point out that under our frugal Premier this Government was supposed to be setting new standards of accountability. He and his accountable officers could be establishing new benchmarks. Let us examine the benchmarks set by Dr Glyn Davis.

First, what did this person spend on travel in his first year in the job? Figures disclosed during the Estimates hearings highlighted that in the first financial year of the Beattie Government he spent \$46,345.09 on travel and a further \$10,034.51 on accommodation. In short, Dr Davis has been spending more than \$1,000 per week on travel and accommodation costs alone. Unlike Ms Macdonnell, I do not think that Dr Davis has travelled economy class for some time.

Then we come to the money that Dr Davis has spent on alcohol for his own office on the 15th floor of the Executive Building. He has spent another \$1,019.50 during year one of the new Beattie administration. And what about in-house entertainment for public servants? That is not entertainment for community groups, business lunches or official entertainment. It is entertainment that Dr Davis shouts for fellow public servants. The kind-hearted Dr Davis has again excelled himself. He shouted public servants on 53 occasions alone in his first year in the job. That is more than one occasion a week, although obviously the figure does not include the numerous times he has been interstate and overseas. In the first year of the Beattie Government, he shouted his fellow chief executives a meal on 21 occasions. Then he hosted three so-called senior management forums, costing around \$650. It must have been tough business. There were seven occasions on which he shouted departmental staff. Let us not forget working lunches. One could not expect Dr Davis to buy his own lunch too often. There were 16 of those.

Finally, I come to what are called "departmentally hosted functions". I wonder what those were. I am sure that they must have been good because, although he shouted only four of them, the taxpayers forked out \$300 for the first, \$180 for the second, \$453 for the third and \$762.50 for the last. No lucky public servant who has received an invite to a Dr Davis function could disagree with the fact that he appears to be a generous host with taxpayers' funds.

It is a pity that obviously Dr Davis has not read or has blatantly ignored the guidelines issued for personal expenses by chief executives. If he had read them, he would have seen that the guidelines require that chief executives are not generally allowed to entertain other public servants at the expense of the taxpayers and are required "to be careful to ensure that such occurrences are exceptional". Perhaps under the

new frugal Beattie administration, shouting 53 times is exceptional. If so, there must be a new meaning for the word.

One could not disagree with the proposition that Dr Davis is a good mate. As an example, I refer to his own writing companion, Peter Bridgman. This is the same Peter Bridgman who co-wrote a book with Dr Davis entitled Australian Policy Handbook, published by Allen and Unwin last year. This is the same Peter Bridgman who, on the election of the Beattie Government and at the request of Glyn Davis, was transferred from the Department of Primary Industries to the Premier's Department. This is the same Peter Bridgman who was subsequently appointed as head of the Legal Policy Directorate in the revamped Office of Cabinet in the Premier's Department. This is the same Peter Bridgman who was appointed by a selection panel even though there was only one applicant for the job. How very convenient! I wonder if anyone on that panel pondered whether merit and equity might have been better served by actually looking for a wider applicant selection pool.

When this Parliament last sat, my friend the Leader of the Opposition highlighted the highly irregular way that the Deputy Director-General of the Premier's Department was being paid. Instead of dealing with this issue, the Premier brought up the Bridgman appointment. This was despite the fact that the matter had not even been raised except in a one-off question that was asked weeks earlier during the Estimates hearings. Talk about a guilty conscience!

When one looks at the list of people acknowledged in the learned publication by our mates Davis and Bridgman, on the whole we see a veritable Who's Who of Labor identities. Our friends acknowledge Jacki Byrne, Margaret Gardiner—no doubt with a special vote of thanks from Davis—Michael Keating, Cynthia Newbown, Philip Selth and Ken Smith. It is almost a Labor factional get-together. By the way, that is the same Jacki Byrne who Dr Davis had appointed to his department on a \$90,000-plus per annum contract to advise on correctional services matters. No doubt, she is on hand to provide comment on further drafts of publications that he must be writing on how to improve public sector morale by spending taxpayers' funds on in-house entertainment.

The amazing thing is that when questioned during the Estimates hearings, the Premier justified all of these matters. On the issue of entertaining public servants, the Premier said that the 53 shouts only averaged about \$42 a pop. Something Mr and Mrs Average in Inala, Bulimba, Ipswich, Woodridge or Logan may like to ponder is this statement by our frugal Premier—

"He is hardly living the life of Riley. In fact, it seems to me like he cannot even find a decent place to eat. When you scan the list

of expenditure, it is obvious that most items are in the vicinity of \$40 or \$50".

This makes one wonder where our frugal Premier is eating if he is so out of touch with reality. For the record, he seems to have forgotten the functions that cost in excess of \$100, of which there were a few, or the function, which was held two weeks before Christmas last year for fellow chief executives, that cost in excess of \$1,000. In fact, the Premier attempted to justify this extravagance by referring to private enterprise and to functions hosted by the coalition Premier's director-general in the Queensland Room. The number and cost of functions hosted by Dr Davis in the Queensland Room or in any other locality for non-public servants was never asked about and is not relevant to the issue of breaching the guidelines for public servants entertaining other public servants at taxpayers' expense.

This Government was supposed to set new and better standards. This was supposed to be a new-age reform Government headed by "Mr Frugality". Instead, we see hypocrisy and snouts in the trough, made even more nauseous by the humbug, hypocrisy and ham acting that is fast becoming the hallmark of this third-rate Government. I will let history judge if Glyn Davis leaves any prints in the sand while he heads the Premier's Department other than those that point to his fast-growing reputation as "Mr Entertainment". I suspect that no decent Queenslander who looks at the public record will think that he is making a decent contribution.

Time expired.
