



Speech by

CAROLYN MALE

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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DUTIES BILL

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (6.48 p.m.): Tonight I rise to speak on the Duties Bill 2001, which is basically a rewrite of the Stamp Act 1894. It should be noted that this rewrite has been asked for by businesses and the community for a number of years. It is very important that it is noted that the Beattie Labor government is taking the bull by the horns and is doing what it can to help business in Queensland.

Mr Cummins: Business friendly government.

Ms MALE: We certainly are a business friendly government. The original act has been amended over the years in an ad hoc fashion to try to fix it and bring it in line with current business practices. Now we have a bill that has been clearly written and is easy to understand. As we have noted before, it will be very good for business.

The principles adhered to in the drafting of this bill reflect the government's approach to helping business. When I reflect on the type of work that the Beattie Labor government has done over the years to help business, I think of things like the Red Tape Reduction Task Force and the introduction of the Department of State Development, which means that small businesses across Queensland are able to access good quality advice which helps them to do business in Queensland. They are getting out there, consulting with small business and seeing what the issues are that they need to deal with. They are helping them work their way through the various different government departments to see what can be done to improve business in Queensland. Whether they are in the urban areas or in regional or rural Queensland, they know that the Beattie Labor government is there to help them via the Department of State Development. We also looked at issues such as streamlining the hours of business for smaller shops. These are just a few of the things that we are doing to help businesses in Queensland.

I noted that the member for Toowoomba South said that he cannot possibly support this, because he feels it is bad for business. It is a nice bit of rhetoric, but what do we see from the opposition and from the Liberal Party? What we see on the federal scene is the introduction of the GST. Gee, that has been really good for business! That has really helped them out! It is an absolute financial disaster. How many small businesses have closed since the introduction of the GST? We will see far more in the years to come. Then it is complicated even further by having to fill out the ridiculous BAS statement, which is difficult and consumes hours of time. That is hours of their time that some of these small business owners could have been spending with their families or on other aspects of their businesses and which would be a lot more profitable than sitting in a back room somewhere filling out endless forms.

Mr Cummins: Tax collectors.

Ms MALE: They are unpaid tax collectors for the federal coalition government. That is what we see from coalition governments. We see mean and tricky acts to try to prevent people from getting on with their lives, earning a decent living and being able to live their lives well.

Mr Horan interjected.

Ms MALE: Interestingly, the member for Toowoomba South is not supporting businesses. In relation to the Duties Bill 2001, he is still not supporting small businesses. It is really quite appalling.

Let us look at what else the coalition government has done in the federal sphere. We are looking at the further sale of Telstra. What businesses have benefited from the sale of Telstra so far? It has certainly helped some shareholders. They have made a bit of a profit from it.

A government member: Certainly not the rural sector.

Ms MALE: It has not helped regional or rural Australia or Queensland and it has done nothing for small businesses elsewhere. What will we see if a coalition government is re-elected in the federal sphere? An even further erosion of services in the bush! Once again, are they helping small business or big business? I do not think they are interested in helping business at all.

In relation to this bill, it is very important to note that there are two aspects which are hallmarks of the Beattie Labor government. The first was an extensive consultation system so that everyone had a chance to make a contribution and see what can be done with the drafting of this legislation to make it good for business. Also, if the bill is passed by the House and implemented we will see an extensive education process by the Office of State Revenue. We are helping businesses all the way through so that they can work through the new legislation and get the best out of it for themselves.

Mr English: User friendly government.

Ms MALE: It is.

It needs to be noted that this bill works in with other states' legislation, which means it is easier for business. It modernises the legislation, minimises compliance costs and it simplifies the whole system. Most importantly, it retains Queensland's tax base at that level so that there is no detriment to Queensland.

I think it needs to be put on the record that this is a comprehensive, clear and correct piece of legislation. I commend this bill to the House.
