



Speech by

# CARRYN SULLIVAN

MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE

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Hansard 25 March 2003

## PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND AMENDMENT BILL

**Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN** (Pumicestone—ALP) (4.01 p.m.): I am pleased to rise to support the bill as—as has been said by a number of speakers from this side—it is necessary to provide absolute protection within Queensland to all authorised broadcasters of parliamentary proceedings on the Internet from criminal or civil liability. This bill does this by amending a number of provisions of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001. It extends the existing protection provided to authorised publishers of parliamentary papers to encompass authorised broadcasters of parliamentary proceedings within Queensland. That means that authorised broadcasters such as the Speaker, Parliamentary Service staff and Internet service providers engaged by the Speaker or the Clerk will not be liable to criminal or civil action in performing their legitimate functions of broadcasting parliamentary proceedings on the Internet.

As a member of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee—

**Ms Keech:** And a fine member, too.

**Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN:** I will take that interjection from my good friend the member for Albert, but may I say that my participation pales in comparison to hers. I agree with the suggestion that any legislative provisions that facilitate the wider dissemination of parliamentary proceedings have merit. The bill has sufficient regard to and, indeed, enhances the institution of parliament.

Prior to the last election, the Premier made a commitment to the people of this state—and I know that he received a lot of positive feedback—to put in place arrangements to enable parliament to be broadcast live on the Internet. I know that a number of my constituents are looking forward to this proposal that will provide this e-democracy initiative to Queenslanders and beyond.

**Ms Keech:** And also to the people of Albert.

**Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN:** I hope that the people of Albert will take a keen interest.

This means that everyone will have the opportunity to tune in and listen to debates on bills such as this one. It will not only give them a choice as to how they view the parliament; it will also be a direct link, which is somewhat different from reading or listening to someone else reporting on the parliament. They will be able to make an informed opinion instead of hearing it from someone else.

**Mr Lawlor:** What a great idea.

**Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN:** It is a great idea. Quite frankly—and I know that every member would agree with me, including the member for Albert—it is very important to get this information first-hand. I take great pride in showing this place to constituents and schoolchildren. Often it is their first visit and they are stunned by the level of activity and work that is actually put in here, particularly by members such as the member for Albert.

This broadcasting will give people an insight into how the House operates before they visit. That must be considered a real advantage as I am sure that it will enable them to get more benefit from their actual visit. We all remember the hundreds of schoolchildren who visited parliament at its historic sitting in Townsville in north Queensland in September last year.

**Ms Keech:** Thousands.

**Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN:** It might have been thousands. This government is to be commended for its community engagement policies. This bill is another step forward to ensure that more people will

be kept informed directly of the government's activities and, more importantly, it will allow and promote public involvement and comment.

The broadcasting of parliament is yet another outside mechanism to keep the government even more accountable. We have seen already the successful introduction of freedom of information laws, the introduction of judicial reviews of ministerial decisions, and organisations such as the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and the Crime and Misconduct Commission. I am looking forward, as other members of the House are—and obviously the member for Southport is very passionate about this—to the live audio broadcast of the parliamentary sittings on the Internet, including text captioning to identify speakers and the stage of proceedings where possible.

I congratulate the Premier on his foresight, his openness and his accountability and all others who played a part in bringing the bill to parliament. I commend it to the House. Maybe this bill will help clean up some of the uncouth language heard and the behaviour that has been seen in this House in recent times. I commend the bill.