



Speech by

**Mr D. BRISKEY**

**MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND**

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Hansard 13 May 2003

**GOVERNORS [SALARY AND PENSIONS] BILL**

**Mr BRISKEY** (Cleveland—ALP) (3.13 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Governors (Salary and Pensions) Bill 2003. Firstly, I join with other members in congratulating Dr Quentin Bryce on her appointment as the next Governor of Queensland. I am very sure that Dr Bryce will build upon the good work undertaken by outgoing Governor, Major General Peter Arnison, to continue making the role meaningful to all Queenslanders and will also bring to the position her vast and well-documented experience on social issues. I take this opportunity to thank, as other members have, His Excellency Major General Peter Arnison and Mrs Arnison. I wish them all the best for their futures. I thank them for the work they have done during their time as Governor and wife of the Governor.

When she takes over as the 24th Governor of Queensland in July, Dr Bryce will be fulfilling a position that will befit from her extensive experience as a lawyer and her personal commitment to human rights issues. Her fine reputation precedes her. Dr Bryce will join with Marie Bashir, Governor of New South Wales, and South Australia's Marjorie Jackson-Nelson as present constitutional female heads of state governments, making a total of three women state governors for Australia.

With the announcement of Dr Bryce's appointment, I would like to commend to the House the timely introduction of the Governors (Salary and Pensions) Bill 2003. The bill modernises acts relating to the salary and pensions of the Governor. It takes in the removal by the Commonwealth of the vice-regal income tax exemption. As has already been noted, the salary of the current Governor of Queensland is exempt from income tax under the Commonwealth Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. In 2001 this exemption was repealed to take effect from the appointment of the next representative in each state and territory—in Queensland's case upon Dr Bryce's appointment in July.

This bill is a step forward. Briefly, I would like to make note of a key provision of the bill. The bill provides that the surviving partner of a deceased Governor is entitled to a lifetime pension. The eligibility of a Governor's spouse or partner, which includes a de facto, is consistent with recent amendments contained within the Discrimination Law Amendment Act 2002. It also sets out and clarifies entitlements upon remarriage and is consistent with provisions covering the partners of judges and members of parliament.

In short, the bill brings the pension arrangements for governors into the present time. The setting of the Governor's salary by regulation instead of by Order in Council promotes accountability, because a regulation is disallowable before the Assembly. The mechanism of an Order in Council is antiquated and, therefore, these amendments are opportune. It is timely that we bring the salary and pension arrangements for governors' partners up to date and into modern times and that we ensure consistency across related legislation. Consequently, I am pleased to support the amendment of the Governors Pension Act 1977 to ensure that pension entitlements of future governors remain in proportion to salary. This bill is an opportunity to modernise the legislation on the Governor's salary and pension entitlements into one clear act of parliament. I commend the bill to the House.