



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

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PASTORAL WORKERS' ACCOMMODATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (4.10 p.m.): I welcome the opportunity to speak on the Pastoral Workers' Accommodation Amendment Bill 2003. I would like to speak about two key points of this important bill. The first is the role and responsibilities of the chief industrial inspector and of the chief executive and, secondly, the new penalty points system that will operate.

Traditionally the chief industrial inspector has been the nominated departmental officer for the purpose of various administrative duties under the act. In the drafting of the amendment bill parliamentary counsel recommended that the appropriate officer, for the purposes of administrative functions under the act, should be the chief executive of the administering department. This aligns with current accepted practice.

The administrative functions include the following: firstly, the issuing of a permit to allow for temporary accommodation to be provided for workers under special circumstances such as where the existing accommodation is destroyed or damaged or where workers may be employed on certain temporary work; and, secondly, extending the timing which the occupier must comply with a notice to comply issued by an inspector. In the course of the performance of these duties it is envisaged that the chief executive will liaise with the chief inspector before making final decisions.

A number of amendments of an administrative nature have also been made in consultation with the Office of Queensland Parliamentary Council to reflect current drafting principles and practice. These amendments mean that each offence provision within the act is identified and the appropriate maximum penalty unit amount is inserted at each provision. This replaces the existing general penalty provision and is in complete accordance with current legislative principles as practised in this state. The standard maximum penalty of 10 penalty units reflects the penalty that currently exists for the offence under the governing Pastoral Workers' Accommodation Regulations 1989.

These changes and other amendments contained in the Pastoral Workers' Accommodation Amendment Bill 2003 will help ensure a better standard of living for workers and a more streamlined and effective administrative approach for employers.

I would like to place on record my respect for the role of industrial inspectors over many decades in our community. As a former public servant, the role of industrial inspectors was highly respected, particularly those who worked in country towns across Queensland where they were an integral part of the community. For me an inspirational and hardworking industrial inspector was the legendary Barry Dittmer, now retired. Barry was a great role model for many industrial inspectors in Queensland. He was a great role model for younger public servants, including myself, and I count his friendship as an honour. I would like to congratulate the minister and commend the bill to the House.