



Speech by

**Hon. John Mickel**

**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

Hansard Wednesday, 18 April 2007

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## **STATUTORY BODIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. RJ MICKEL** (Logan—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations) (3.46 pm), in reply: We have heard a very entertaining debate in so many respects. I will deal with the points raised by the member for Maroochydore last. The comments by the government members I appreciate; they understand what a statutory body is. The member for Moggill in his confusion did not address the bill at all but told us what a wonderful thing WorkChoices is because it gave us flexibility. Yet the member for Charters Towers bemoaned the fact that QR was flexible. There is a bit of coalition disunity between the member for Charters Towers and the member for Moggill.

The poor member for Gympie does not know whether he is for WorkChoices or against it. Let me take you back to a question the poor old thing asked me a few weeks ago. He asked—

In establishing a statutory authority to monitor the impact of WorkChoices, what guarantees will he be extracting from the new authority or what legislative mechanism will he be putting in place that ensures the new statutory authority and all existing statutory authorities and government owned corporations do not embrace the principles of WorkChoices for their employees?

To listen to him today, it seems he could not see the difference between his support for WorkChoices and his question where he was against WorkChoices. What we have is coalition disunity but we also have confusion from one member of the coalition.

Let us deal with the matters raised by the member for Maroochydore, because there are a couple that need commenting upon. The first one is that this bill returns employees of certain statutory bodies affected by WorkChoices to the state industrial system. As I have outlined previously, the Queensland government is opposed to the nature of WorkChoices and its impact on employees. This bill is part of the Queensland government's response to the WorkChoices laws. It will re-establish state industrial jurisdiction over workers of affected statutory authorities by taking their employment relationships beyond the reach of the federal workplace relations laws through their employment by the newly created employment office. As I detailed earlier in this place, in the case of the museum, library and art gallery, the employees will in fact be employed by the state Department of Education, Training and the Arts. We are doing this because WorkChoices is unfair.

In response to the confusion in the opposition about QR, I have to tell opposition members that QR is a government owned corporation. It was excluded from the bill because it is a reflection of the competitive commercial environment in which it operates and the complexity of untangling the operation of the Corporations Law. It is because they are trading corporations that they are captured by WorkChoices legislation. However, despite GOCs remaining under federal industrial laws, these entities will continue to operate in accordance with the government's industrial relations policies and practices to maintain fair treatment of employees.

The honourable member for Maroochydore asked me about the industrial instruments currently covering statutory body employees. It is correct that these employees continue to be covered by notional agreements or preserved state agreements. New collective agreements will be negotiated under the state system when these employees are returned to the state system.

The government has consulted extensively on this bill. I thank both sides of the House for their support. In thanking both sides, may I also commend my department officials who have worked tirelessly to make sure this bill was ready in its proper presentation to the parliament today. I thank them for their constant professionalism and dedication. I commend the bill to the House.