



Speech by

**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS**

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## **STATUTORY BODIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr KNUTH** (Charters Towers—NPA) (3.38 pm): In speaking to the Statutory Bodies Legislation Amendment Bill, I wish to address a couple of issues. The coalition's policy, which was released during the 2006 state election campaign, stated that the coalition government would retain industrial relations responsibility for Queensland's public sector.

The Beattie government promised to amend state legislation to ensure that the employees of statutory authorities caught by WorkChoices are transferred to a non-corporate entity so that the employer becomes the Crown. However, in the minister's second reading speech this promise was changed to return employees of certain statutory bodies affected by WorkChoices to the state industrial relations system. He added that this bill is designed to re-establish state industrial relations jurisdiction over employees of affected statutory bodies by taking their employment relations beyond the reach of federal workplace relations laws through their employment by a newly created employment office.

I raise concerns in relation to issues that have been brought to me by union representatives and rail workers in my electorate. I note that Queensland Rail employees are not included in this legislation. Queensland Rail, a government owned corporation, has been pushing for a stationmaster in Hughenden to carry out the work of two positions after the Q-Link freight terminal supervisor resigned. In other words, the stationmaster will be a stationmaster but also a Q-Link freight supervisor as well.

Another concern is that Queensland Rail is pushing for work reforms for train crews. It is pushing for 12-hour shifts, self-drive only, between Hughenden and Mount Isa which will see another 10 jobs removed from Hughenden. This coincides with the loss of many more jobs in the past two years.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms van Litsenburg): Member for Charters Towers, relevance, please. Stay on the bill.

**Mr KNUTH:** I would like to bring to the attention of the House that it is hypocritical of this government to pretend to care for workers and their families when in reality its own corporation continually ignores the plight of workers. WorkChoices is being used by Queensland Rail, a corporation owned by the Labor government, to justify its push for 12-hour driver-only shifts. I ask the minister to investigate that issue. This is not just coming from Shane Knuth. Members can access media alerts and see what the rail unions are saying. They are very unsettled about Queensland Rail pushing for driver-only 12-hour shifts which is an unsafe work practice. It is using work reforms to justify its position.

Both sides of the House claim to be the worker's friend. I started in the railway in 1983 when there were 25,000 railway employees. When the Goss government came to power it reduced it to 11,500. The Redbank and Banyo workshops closed down, railway stations and sidings were closed down and guards, shunters and porters were removed from their positions. The south-east corner has an infrastructure problem. The minister for communities and disabilities is encouraging groups from northern, western and rural Queensland to come to Brisbane to show and promote their—

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Charters Towers, you have been warned once.

**Mr KNUTH:** This is a short speech. I ask the minister to investigate this. Wayne Goss admitted that the worst decision he ever made was to treat railway employees the way he did. We all have skeletons in

our closet; we all have regrets. Wayne Goss was brave enough to admit that he had made a bad decision in relation to rail employees. Those opposite have kicked the workers in the guts. Why are they pointing the finger at everyone else when they are the ones kicking the workers in the guts?

We support this legislation because our commitment is that state employees should remain under a state industrial award system. I commend the bill to the House.