



Speech by

Hon. Margaret Keech

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard Wednesday, 11 November 2009

TRADE MEASUREMENT LEGISLATION REPEAL BILL

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (9.03 pm): I rise to support the Trade Measurement Legislation Repeal Bill 2009. In doing so, I want to talk about the very important work that the Trade Measurement inspectors have done over the decades and my strong support for the provisions with regard to their security of employment. The transfer of responsibility for administration of trade measurement to the Commonwealth is a significant milestone and should not go by without acknowledging the contribution of this function to the Queensland economy and the work by the Queensland Trade Measurement staff. Since Queensland became a self-governing colony 150 years ago, Queensland Trade Measurement inspectors have gone about their work of ensuring reliability of measurement equipment used in trade. In more recent times with a leap forward in transport, communications and technology, the local market has transformed into a national and international market.

Consequently, the role of the trade measurement inspector has become increasingly technical and specialised. Trade measurement expertise and test procedures must keep pace with the ongoing advancement in measuring equipment and processes used by industry as the diversity, complexity and output of production increases. Trade Measurement inspectors can be seen testing measuring instruments used by grocery retailers and service stations. In fact, they operate across the spectrum of industry, ensuring the accuracy of measuring instruments, including in primary and secondary production. For example, they can test measuring equipment used by processing and packing plants, warehouses, produce agents, road and railway transport carriers, depots and ports. Importantly, they give certainty to the buyer in ensuring that we actually get what we pay for.

As a former fair trading minister myself, I know that the Queensland inspectorate is highly regarded for its professionalism and its expertise. It is no accident therefore that Queensland is regarded as the leader in the national field of trade measurement. In the current state based legislation system, in most cases Queensland has led any necessary reforms to provide the template for the nation. Queenslanders can indeed be very pleased and very proud of the good work of inspectors. That is why I am pleased to see that arrangements are being made to ensure that existing staff will not be disadvantaged by the move to a national regime. The Commonwealth has offered positions to all Trade Measurement staff for employment in similar roles and locations with similar salary scales.

Queensland Trade Measurement employees will also have the choice of remaining with QSuper or going over to a Commonwealth approved super scheme. Queensland has 28 Trade Measurement staff and they do an absolutely excellent job. Most of them have indicated that they may accept the Commonwealth offer of employment. The security of employees is of paramount concern, and the Bligh government will make every effort to satisfactorily redeploy any individuals who may decline the offer. I am pleased that the Queensland Public Sector Union is being consulted throughout the transition process and I commend the bill to the House.