



Speech by

**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE**

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## **TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)**

**Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—LNP) (3.35 pm): I rise to speak to the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2). In her second reading speech the minister stated that this bill will deliver three significant reforms: it will better facilitate the development of infrastructure to deal with the challenges of a growing population and in particular provide legislative framework for the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project; it will strengthen protection of the marine environment by providing tougher powers to Maritime Safety Queensland; and it will amend legislation to create a robust port planning regime for the future, maintain Queensland Rail as a passenger focused government owned corporation and establish QRNational as a proud, Queensland based company. It will also amend the Transport Infrastructure Act for a smooth transition during the restructure and divestment of the business of Queensland Rail Ltd.

I believe that there is no pride in Queensland Rail anymore. I cannot see how we can make a statement that the passenger service is still in the proud ownership of Queensland taxpayers when we are about to sell off the profitable sector of Queensland Rail. Citytrain is running at a billion dollar loss. The passenger service all up is running at a billion dollar loss. The coal component is running at a billion dollar profit, yet we are going to sell that sector. So the question is: what happens after the coal component—the profitable sector of Queensland Rail—is sold and we are running at a billion dollar loss on the passenger service? Who is going to pay for that? Like I said, there is no pride in selling off Queensland Rail and there is no pride within Queensland Rail anymore.

This sell-off is one of the greatest acts of betrayal by the Labor Party in Queensland's history. We never thought we would see the day when a 144-year icon, built by the taxpayers of Queensland through their sweat and toil, would be sold by the current Bligh government, supported by every Labor MP in this House. Communities thrived on the back of the railways and could depend on a reliable freight service. It boasted up to 26,000 employees, and many of those workers were Aboriginals, South Sea Islanders and Torres Strait Islanders.

It is a shame to see that from Townsville to Mount Isa there is no longer any rail freight service. With the size of the resources sector out there at Mount Isa, Cloncurry, Julia Creek and all of those towns in that region, there is a wonderful railway track and a road right beside it and not one train runs to support those communities with a rail freight service. Everything goes by truck. This is the result of years of a Labor government and its management of Queensland Rail, which once had 26,000 employees—now reduced to 12,000.

There is a lot of insecurity in relation to employment. A lot of employees who have been employed in the last 20 or 30 years feel that their jobs are insecure. Two or three employees have been sacked from their positions on the grounds that they were not literate enough to fill out their safety form. The unions powerfully protested against that, and one of them received a reprieve and one of them left. Then another employee, knowing that his job was not secure, was appointed to a permanent, full-time job and so gave in his notice to Queensland Rail, but Queensland Rail penalised him \$1,233 because he gave insufficient notice to leave on the grounds that he needed to take this other job.

I will read from the correspondence received. It states—

It is approved to accept your resignation with QR as from completion of duty on 20th April, 2010.

You will be due payment for the following entitlements:

Annual leave ...

Loading ...

You will receive 1 pay docket on cessation detailing your final payment and cessation entitlement breakdown.

However, employees are required to give 2 weeks notice of resignation. Failure to do so will result in a deduction from final pay of an amount equivalent to the period of notice not received. Advice of your resignation was received on 19th April, 2010. This means that you will be deducted monies for the period 21.04.2010 to 2.05.2010 which is the 2 week notice period. This amount comes to \$1,213.92. This will be deducted from time worked, annual leave and leave loading.

I table this correspondence.

*Tabled paper:* Copy of a letter, dated 23 April 2010, from Sheree Dooley, Payroll Administrative Services, Operational Services, Shared Services Group, QR to Robert Cotter, headed 'Resignation' [2225].

This person is a bridge labourer. Twelve hundred dollars is a lot of money. They have deducted this amount from the date he decided to leave. He decided to leave because his job was not secure. I encourage the Minister for Transport to investigate this matter and to use her executive powers to enable this man to get his money. Twelve hundred dollars is a lot of money, especially for a bridge worker. The unions are very upset about it and have made an issue about it on TV.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms O'Neill): Order! I ask the honourable member to please come back to the purpose of the bill.

**Mr KNUTH:** The minister has also stated that we will increase the penalties for marine pollution. This is the result of two damning reports on the *Pacific Adventurer* disaster and the grounding of the *Shen Neng 1*. Research shows that the reef provides employment for some 63,000 people engaged in the tourism, fishing and recreation industries and yields annual revenues in the order of \$5.8 billion, including \$5.1 billion from tourism, \$610 million from recreational activities and \$119 million from commercial fishing.

At the last election who did the Premier target when it came to protecting the reef? She attacked the farmers in order to get the support of the radical green extremists who contribute very little to the economy. All this was done to save the government's political hide. It was at the expense of the agricultural communities in the Burdekin, Mackay, Whitsunday and Wet Tropics catchments and put at risk the agricultural economy, which is under threat at present, worth \$3.8 billion.

At the time nothing was done to protect the marine environment. Nothing was done about the nutrient run-off from the rainforests. Likewise, very little was done in relation to nutrient run-off from the cities. When it comes to the pressure that was placed on the area by *Pacific Adventurer* and *Shen Neng 1* we now see the government talking the tough talk but this should have been done years ago.