




Speech by

Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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QUEENSLAND INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION POLICY BILL

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (8.52 pm): I would like to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Queensland Industry Participation Policy Bill 2010. I, too, must confess, though, to a feeling of bewilderment as to why we are actually debating a piece of legislation such as this. The explanatory notes suggest that 'legislating to require the development of a local industry policy will ensure that the principles of securing economic, employment and social benefits through state government funded major project procurement are put into practice by successive Queensland governments'. What a frivolous excuse for a piece of legislation.

Which Queensland government in its right mind would not seek to use Queensland industry at every opportunity? But, hang on, maybe that is the nub of it. Maybe this government is trying to cover its own poor record of securing economic, employment and social benefits through state government funded major project procurements. Maybe it is this toxic Bligh Labor government that needs a legislative imperative, as opposed to ministerial or policy direction, to ensure it sources locally, because there is nothing in this legislation that, as the shadow minister said, we have not already seen in the local industry policy. There is no additional impetus to actually deliver on. There are just nice sounding principles and objectives—broad motherhood statements that are still open to interpretation.

Let's face it: to date there has only been half-hearted enforcement of the local industry plans. One prominent local industry, QMI Solutions, is on the record stating 'ardent enforcement of local industry plans is crucial to its success'. Furthermore, even the unions agree that this legislation has no real purpose. The AMWU suggests that for it to be of real benefit there would need to be legal consequences for noncompliance. Only then would the relevant organisations be swayed to take local industry plans seriously. Provisions need to be made to penalise noncompliance and to strictly monitor implementation by the relevant state government organisations.

The introduction of this bill is nothing more than meaningless posturing by this government so as to be seen to be doing something in relation to Queensland industry and jobs. If the government wants to take the competitiveness of Queensland industry seriously, other avenues can be pursued instead of or in conjunction with the objectives in this bill. This means relieving Queensland industry of barriers to becoming and being competitive—barriers such as taxes, charges and fees and the ever-present administrative burdens. I submit that addressing these impediments will deliver a longer lasting outcome, as opposed to the short-term approach which this bill proposes, as it allows Queensland industry to grow and become competitive in its own right. The government may have good intentions, but I am afraid good intentions are not enough.