




Speech by

Dr Chris Davis

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

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INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (FAIR WORK ACT HARMONISATION) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Dr DAVIS** (Stafford—LNP) (5.39 pm): I rise in support of the Industrial Relations (Fair Work Act Harmonisation) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This is good medicine for Queensland. It is strong medicine for a chronic and debilitating disease that is harming all Queenslanders—a disease brought to Queensland by none other than the Australian Labor Party; a disease that the people of Queensland know must be fixed and have asked the LNP to fix. The disease is chronic toxic debt. It is a disease that is sapping life from the Queensland economy, an economy that must now be fixed.

This morning I attended a business breakfast in my electorate and once again heard how really tough it is for business because the all-necessary confidence and investment is not there. It is simply not happening and, as the Treasurer pointed out earlier today, it is that consequence of debt that has caused such extraordinary problems in countries such as Greece. The notion that one simply must keep borrowing one's way out of debt is not a solution, not least because one sees the impact on one's credit rating and also completely unreasonably leaves the problem to the next generation of Queenslanders. As Einstein pointed out, we do not fix the problems using the same thinking that created them. We clearly do need a different industrial relations paradigm to address the issues.

A vital part of the solution is this legislation—legislation that requires parties to recognise that we have to live within our means and begin the process of repaying debt and regrowing Queensland. If not, debt grows like a cancer. Spain is another example where, tragically, the people who are paying the highest price for their inability to contain debt are the youngsters—youngsters who desperately need jobs at a time in their life when they need the skills and are best placed to develop them.

This responsible, balanced legislation before the House allows this government to maintain services and productivity as well as encourages essential investment in Queensland. We know well that one of the key issues in this global market when investors look to where they plan to make their investments is the stability of the government, the wisdom of the government and, very importantly, the industrial relations framework that makes it all possible. All things that maintain and grow the number of jobs in Queensland are therefore absolutely essential.

Tomorrow morning I have the honour of representing the Minister for Health at an opening at the convention centre of a major conference with international speakers looking at the relationship between jobs and health. As we know, jobs are essential for an enormous number of reasons including the dignity of having a job as well as the contribution to the economy but also, very importantly, the health of the entire community. This legislation is an important part of that as well as it will provide the incentive for employers to employ and allow efficiencies that reduce debt—money currently wasted on debt that the government can, once that matter is resolved, redirect to front-line services, which is another part of the commitment that we gave to the people of Queensland before the election.

This carefully considered legislation is in the long-term interests of all Queenslanders and the sooner we allow that message to get out there the better. As such, the Australian Labor Party should be queuing up to get behind it—to be part of the solution rather than part of the ongoing problem. What a wonderful way for the Australian Labor Party to say sorry for bringing toxic debt to Queensland—to support this legislation.

This legislation provides a responsible foundation for this responsible government to engage with responsible workers. As such, it will not only allow us to address the problems bequeathed by Labor but also allow us to negotiate sensibly with our workforce to get Queensland firmly and fairly back on track to being Australia's premier state. I congratulate all who have contributed to this legislation and am pleased to commend this bill and its amendments to the entire House.