




Speech by  
**Desley Scott**

**MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE**

Hansard Thursday, 17 May 2012

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**PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT  
BILL**

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (9.59 pm): This bill, the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012, is one of great importance for it will affect how this state is governed into the future. Much has been said over the years regarding the absence of an upper house in the Queensland parliament and it is a matter of public record that in times passed many pieces of legislation could have been improved with a strong committee system tasked with reviewing meticulously every aspect of a bill. No government is infallible but collectively we can improve matters before the House.

Since the Legislative Council was abolished in 1922 the absence of a mechanism of review led ultimately to many of the excesses of the National Party under Joh Bjelke-Petersen. The recent establishment of the new committee system has enabled the cross-party committees to study in detail legislation before the House seeking public comment, submissions from stakeholders, briefings and public hearings. It is a fact that much of the legislation that passes through this House is supported by both sides of the chamber. However, there are often details which need to be deliberated on prior to being debated in the House. The system, as it has operated, has enabled important changes to be made prior to the final debate in parliament. It is often the unintended consequences which, at times, brings legislation back to this House for amendments.

I had the privilege of serving on the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee with chairman Kerry Shine. Aided by our excellent research staff, much was accomplished and reports were produced. I believe all who served during our previous term would acknowledge the strength of this committee system. It enabled members to have greater involvement in legislation and detailed scrutiny of bills.

For our Premier to now sideline this committee system with the suggestion that he has the approval of the 'big committee of Queensland' for his election promises is an absolute nonsense. There were many people who voted LNP at this election with tears in their eyes because they believed it was time for a change and they believed that our government had broken trust with the electors. They were changing their vote for the first time ever. To think that the people of Queensland were ticking off every election promise without the detail necessary within legislation is to completely misread the result and demonstrates the lack of understanding of what should happen in this place. It is often in the detail of legislation that issues and problems in the implementation are uncovered.

Being in government is a huge responsibility and, no, the government of the day does not always get it right. The bipartisan committee system has worked well and has been endorsed by all who served in this place during the previous term. Increasing the numbers of government members on each committee suggests the Premier is wishing to hold sway over every aspect of this parliament. Coupled with this is the reduction in the number of opposition members on each committee. It may be the case that we in opposition are small in number, but the government should recognise that what happens in this place is of

great interest to the media, to many in this state who are following with great interest how a government with such an enormous majority treats the trust that has been placed in it by the people of Queensland. It tramples over such issues to its detriment. We will continue to remind the Premier of his promise to rule with dignity, grace and humility.

It was a great privilege to be a member of the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee. Those in this House who served on this committee will attest to the smooth running of the committee, the greater insights it affords when considering the finer details of a bill and the great benefit of briefings, submissions, public hearings and stakeholder involvement leading to a bill being returned to the House having been scrutinised in great detail. I would like to thank our research officers, who work tirelessly to ensure the work of these committees is carried out efficiently.

The other issue that I wish to mention in my speech is the inclusion of the Speaker on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly as chair of the committee. For this House to operate in an effective way I believe it is imperative for the Speaker to be involved in this important aspect of the parliamentary precinct. In many countries the Speaker of the House is held in higher esteem than ministers of the Crown. For there to be a committee which is virtually tasked with running the parliamentary precinct and to not have the Speaker taking a leading role I believe is in error.

While I support some aspects of this bill, I will not be supporting this bill in total.