




Speech by
Ian Kaye

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Thursday, 23 August 2012

PUBLIC SERVICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KAYE** (Greenslopes—LNP) (5.06 pm): I rise in this place today to speak on the Public Service and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. As a member of the committee I would first like to thank the other members of the committee, those who participated in the public hearings and also the secretariat for their outstanding work. This bill is part of the Newman government's reform agenda and, as previous speakers have mentioned, is designed to restore public sector accountability and efficiency of service. I have also spoken previously in relation to the first stage of this process, the Industrial Relations (Fair Work Act Harmonisation) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012.

The Public Service and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 will refocus the Public Service Commission away from a regulatory function towards a public sector efficiency agenda. I realise that the idea of efficiency may be a foreign concept to those on the opposition benches. I plan to focus on the efficiency components in our reform agenda. One of the fundamental principles of being an elected representative is that you are a caretaker. You have to make sure that the taxpayers of this state are achieving the best possible outcome for the money they pay. Taxpayers have the right to demand an efficient use of their money. Maybe we should all be cognisant of that as all of us here are taxpayers as well. This extends to the services that the people of Queensland utilise. It is about efficiency, accountability and making sure what money is available is used to its best advantage. It is not about giving public servants a hard time or denigrating the jobs that they do.

I refer back to explanatory notes for this bill and the section entitled 'Estimated cost for government implementation' and I quote—

There are no direct financial considerations aside from indirect benefits of a more efficient alignment and better streamlining of the Government's public sector integrity functions.

No cost, more efficiency. I would say that that is a win for the people of this state. The Newman government has refocused the Public Service Commission away from hearing appeals and transferred that function to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. When I spoke on the first part of this process in June of this year, the Industrial Relations (Fair Work Harmonisation) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, I noted the need for efficiency. This is the final stage of that process and will transfer the administrative functions from the Public Service Commission so it can focus on the government's efficiency agenda and the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission can focus on public sector appeals and employment issues.

Another aspect of this bill that helps achieve efficiency for Queensland taxpayers is the removal for the need for annual ethics training. Public Service employees will be given this training during their induction programs and at regular intervals after that. While, for the most part I am sure, honourable members would agree on the need for ethics, do public sector employees need reminding every twelve months what is ethical and what is not? As the Premier noted in his first reading speech and I reiterate—

We are absolutely committed to ensuring that departmental chief executives are given maximum flexibility to provide ethical training at the point of induction and at regular intervals as needed, rather than simply requiring blind compliance with a requirement for annual training.

In other words, we are allowing departmental chiefs to determine whether an employee requires a refresher on ethics. I have absolutely no doubt that the vast majority of public sector employees are ethical people and understand the importance of the jobs they perform. This will enable public sector workers to get on with their jobs and ensure that departmental heads are not slaves to training compliance issues.

The Newman government was elected to stop the waste and get this state back on track. This government is implementing a reform agenda to enable people to get on with doing just that by revitalising our front-line services, getting public servants back into front-line service delivery, as opposed to spin-doctoring and burdening people with enormous amounts of duplication and paperwork. Ensuring efficient workplace practices for our departments and for the Queensland taxpayer is pivotal.

I am aware the people in my electorate of Greenslopes face cost-of-living issues. Over the last three years, prior to March this year, they were constantly hit with increases in things such as motor vehicle registration, exorbitant public transport fares, electricity prices and the requisite rises associated with that. They have had to make adjustments to meet those extra burdens as the former Labor government spent like there was no tomorrow. The Newman government is working hard to improve efficiency in our public sector. The taxpayers and residents of this wonderful state deserve that. An efficient and accountable Public Service utilising all available resources to their best advantage are part of that platform. The Public Service and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 is the final process and I urge all honourable members to support it. I commend the bill to the House.