




Speech by

Jo-Ann Miller

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

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HOLIDAYS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (4.48 pm): In the estimates committee hearing in this parliament we heard the Attorney-General admit, under some duress of course as usual, that he ignored the views of Queenslanders and did not go out for public consultation in relation to Labour Day. Why is this? Why are they being ignored? Because of this childish, ideologically driven Attorney-General and the arrogant LNP government. The Attorney-General did not even consult with the people sitting beside him or the people sitting around him. So what hope does the Queensland public have? None.

This arrogant government has dismissed 110 years of Queensland history, and why? Why would they do it? That is because of their arrogance and their petty attitude towards the workers of Queensland. The workers of Queensland want to celebrate the achievements of their forebears—workers who stood up against the childish bullies that this LNP government wishes to emulate. They stood up for their rights. They stood up for their fellow workers. They stood up for their families and they stood up for future generations. Their sacrifice brought us a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. Their sacrifice brought us holidays and also sick leave. Of course, sick leave seems to be so cherished these days by LNP ministers opposite. Their sacrifice brought us safer workplaces and laws to protect them from injury. Their sacrifice brought us the living conditions we have today. They were not given to us by previous generations of bosses. No way! They were hard fought for by generations of Queenslanders and workers throughout the world.

Labour Day is an important day to recognise these achievements and the struggles workers face in the present and also in the future—something clearly shown by this LNP government, which hunts in packs like killer whales plucking off at will public servants and workers' rights across the state. The attacks by this LNP government on workers compensation is right in the front of every worker's mind in Queensland. Their ridiculous and outrageous attack on ambulance officers and firefighters throughout this state—the mind simply boggles. This government takes away the consultation with firefighters and ambulance officers about government purchases of important equipment that they use for their own safety and that of the people whom they are employed to help. This government aims to take meal allowances off paramedics who work right through their shifts saving lives.

This is why Labour Day is so important to Queenslanders. This is why standing up with them, standing up for them and appreciating their work is so important. Everybody in Queensland can show their support by going to www.standingwithus.com and helping us to help those in the community in need in any emergency. The website Stand for Queensland is another site where information about the petty, mean and tricky attacks by this LNP government on workers, their families and all of our rights can be found. It is a place for workers who believe that it is not the LNP Newman government's place to make decisions like this—moving a sacred day for many Queenslanders—without consultation. So much for the farce that this government pretends to be open and accountable! What a joke! There was no consultation at all. Of course, we have this 'P-plate' Attorney-General, who claims that union membership is not growing. Mr 'P-plate' Attorney-General, you are wrong, wrong, wrong yet again. Yet again you show your complete and utter ignorance of workers in Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ruthenberg): Order! Member for Bundamba, please address your comments through the chair.

Mrs MILLER: The Attorney-General shows a complete ignorance of the issues in his portfolio. He bases his decisions on wrong information and on what his tory mates want to think, but that is not what happens in the real world. In the real world union membership increased by 46,900 workers in Australia in the last 12 months. That is 46,900 people who have seen the benefits of working together for a better world for all of them. These are ABS statistics. Is the Attorney-General going to tell us that he does not believe the Australian Bureau of Statistics? The increase was 46,900 union members. That is about the size of the entire population of Gladstone. That is a huge number of people. In the last 12 months union membership rose, and it rose by four per cent, which is more than this miserable lot offered in relation to the EBA increases. Four seems to be a bit of an odd number for the LNP; they cannot seem to quite count that far. Again, this Attorney-General is wrong, wrong, wrong. Worker representation through the union movement is going up, up, up and we cannot wait to run some of them in the seats against the members opposite. Unions have been on a growing trend of continued growth of membership in Queensland for the last five years. Despite the false claims of this LNP, there has been continual growth. Union numbers are up, credibility of the government is down—way down. That is factual information from the union movement.

Queensland is leading the way with the growth of membership because of the workers' side of politics. In Queensland we do not just fall in line with other states. We do not toe the Sydney and Melbourne lines; we stand up for Queensland and we lead the way. We aim to do better than the rest of Queensland. We strive to get more people protected by unions and we strive for better laws to protect their rights and working conditions. This 'P-plate' Attorney-General just wants to fall in line with the other states. That is his argument. It is a pretty weak argument.

Queenslanders have celebrated Labour Day in Queensland since 1891. It has been a public holiday since 1901. The labour movement, workers, unions and Labor Party members will continue to celebrate Labour Day in Queensland in May just as we have done since well before this Attorney-General was even born and just as we will continue to do after he has left this place. It is not just a public holiday to us; it is a mark, it is a reflection, it is a symbol of the sacrifices made for the things that are most important to us. Certainly it is very important to Ipswich. In Ipswich Labour Day has been run year in, year out. We have marched on a Saturday. We have also marched on the Monday in Brisbane. Many, many workers from Ipswich travel by train down to Brisbane to march. For the last few years we have run the second most successful race day at the Bundamba racetrack. It is called the Ipswich Labour Day race day. Thousands and thousands of workers and their families come to the racetrack to celebrate Labour Day in Queensland.

This Attorney-General will go down in the history of this state as the most shameful person due to moving Labour Day—or trying to move it. It is a great attempt at ideological warfare against workers. That is what this is about. We will be there marching in May because it is Labour Day and nothing that this government will do will stop any one of us. We will also be holding our Ipswich Labour Day race day as well. You try to change things, but you will never change our heart. You will never change our soul. You will never change our minds. You will not change any of that. You will not do it. You will never do it. You think that you can just put a line through it and that is it. But once it is in your heart and in your soul, you are proud. I am a proud worker and I am a proud unionist.

(Time expired)