



Speech by
Reg Gulley

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Hansard Wednesday, 6 June 2012

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

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (4.39 pm): I rise to support the Industrial Relations (Fair Work Act Harmonisation) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I support the bill including the amendments. I have the privilege of being a member of the Finance and Administration Committee under the chairmanship of the member for Coomera, Michael Crandon, and I acknowledge his kind words from just a couple of minutes ago. I also acknowledge Curtis Pitt as deputy chair of that committee. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Michael and Curtis for their leadership of this newly formed committee and for the conduct of the review of legislation in this term. Like Michael, I wish to embarrass Deborah Jeffrey and mention her long hours and acknowledge the good work that she has done on this bill.

I welcome this bill to modernise the legislation. I welcome the bill to modernise the Industrial Relations Act. Importantly, I welcome the bill to allow the Campbell Newman government to revitalise our public sector and the relationship we have. At this point, I wish to thank the industrial bodies and the departmental representatives who attended the public hearing on 30 May 2012. Michael beat me to the punch line of mentioning those members. I recognise the comments made during that consultation by industrial representatives about the short period of consultation, but I do note and value the high quality of submissions that were presented at those public hearings. Predictably, many of those submissions claimed that the state's financial situation should not be considered in industrial relations agreements. I bring 20 years experience as both an employee and a manager of commercial and not-for-profit organisations. Unlike many in the opposition who have never filled out a BAS return, I have the real-life experience to recognise that terms and conditions of employment negotiations are intrinsically tied to the employer's capacity to pay.

We should not lose sight of this state's financial situation, with a \$2.8 billion debt this year, \$85 billion of peak debt and \$600,000 in interest payments each and every hour. Only a sensible government considers a state's current and future financial forecasts. I believe that requiring the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to consider the state's financial position when setting and determining public sector wages only improves and clarifies the basis from which the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission should set public sector wages.

I support the minister's right to intervene in industrial actions. My support is in recognition that there may be protracted and damaging actions where as a last resort—and that is all it is—a minister should have the legislative powers to reluctantly step in in order to protect the economy, society and wellbeing of employees.

I support the enhancement of the employee balloting process for taking protected industrial action. I welcome the involvement of the Electoral Commission of Queensland, an organisation that is well known for conducting ballot processes that are consistent, fair and transparent. I support the Industrial Relations (Fair Work Act Harmonisation) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012.