




Speech by
Sean Choat

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST

Hansard Thursday, 15 November 2012

**GUARDIANSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr CHOAT** (Ipswich West—LNP) (12.06 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Guardianship and Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. It gives me great pleasure to rise on this occasion as I, too, am a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

The bill amends the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000 to provide additional powers to the Public Advocate to strengthen the independence of this office to provide systems advocacy. The bill will provide additional powers such as to compel the providing of information from individuals so that the Public Advocate may have access to better information about matters relevant to the systems advocacy functions and apply sanction for instances of noncompliance, prepare reports to the minister where required on systems issues; and require the minister to table such information in parliament. This aspect of the bill delivers on the LNP's commitment within its 100-day action plan. The additional powers fortify the Office of the Public Advocate's independence and ability to effectively discharge its responsibilities.

The bill also includes amendments to the Electoral Act 1992 to remove the provision of public money as administrative funding for political parties and Independent members of parliament saving, as mentioned by the member for Burleigh, the Queensland taxpayer approximately \$3 million a year. I know how \$3 million a year could be used in my electorate. I think that is a very positive step. The public should not be funding political campaigns. Parties and individuals themselves should be doing that through other means.

There are resulting amendments to the Electrical Safety Act 2002 to remove the statutory position of the Commissioner for Electrical Safety, as we have heard here this morning, and provide for the alternative role of chairman. They will also remove the standing committee status of the Electrical Safety Education Committee and the Electrical Equipment Committee from being nominated statutory committees, with a consequential amendment to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. This will promote efficiency and economy while continuing to support electrical safety outcomes and initiatives. As a former member of the railway, I certainly have an appreciation for electrical safety. I do not accept that these amendments will in any way compromise the safety of workers and others.

The bill contains amendments to the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to exclude breach of bail, as an offence under section 33 of the Bail Act 1980, from the imposition of the offender levy, which is a provision under section 179C of the Penalties and Sentences Act.

The Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal—or QCAT—Act 2009 is amended to remove restrictions relevant to the exercise of stated tribunal powers. It will widen the pool for tribunal members to enable former judges who are ordinary or senior members to sit as judicial members on a wider range of matters, with consequential amendments to the Legal Profession Act 2007 and the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994. This will have significant impacts on the operations of QCAT—all positive aspects. The bill will also amend the Trustee Companies Act 1968 to facilitate both voluntary and compulsory

transfers of trustee company business to the Public Trustee of Queensland. Provisions in the Corporations and Other Legislation Amendment (Trustee Companies and Other Measures) Act 2011 provides for the voluntary transfer of trustee company business from one trustee company to another and, importantly, for the compulsory transfer to be made to a state or territory Public Trustee. Amendments to the Trustee Companies Act 1968 facilitate such transfers.

Although not an overly exciting bill in comparison to others which have come before the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee or, indeed, this House, I believe this bill provides for significant improvements in the way matters relevant are dealt with and ultimately more efficiency and effectiveness for Queensland and Queenslanders. I am of course grateful to the hardworking staff of the committee—Brook Hastie, Sharon Hunter, Ali Jarro, Kelli Longworth and Gail Easton—for their efforts and professional attention to detail in handling the many submissions received. I also thank those who took interest to provide submissions to the committee, because that of course is an important part of how committees function in this place. I congratulate the Attorney-General and his department for the development of this important public policy and I thank my fellow committee members, led of course by the member for Condamine. I commend the bill to the House.