




Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Hansard Thursday, 23 August 2012

PUBLIC SERVICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (5.33 pm): I rise to speak to the Public Service and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. Among other things, it seeks to further reduce the credibility of the parliament, the parliamentary process and the committee system. The other day I attended the rally with the ambos and the firies. I could understand why they were angry and why they were protesting. I point out that the ambos and firies are in the top 10 of the most trusted professions. Politicians are around No. 75. The reason for that is exactly what happened throughout this election campaign: the LNP promised, 'Stick with us and we will never get hungry again.' They promised accountability and efficiency. They also promised that they will be public servant friendly.

The Premier came to Charters Towers and attacked me because I said that the LNP will sell the remainder of Queensland Rail. He attacked me and called me a liar for doing so. And what happened? The other night they voted for the sale of Queensland Rail. Now we are seeing that 2,500 Queensland Rail workers will be laid off and railway tracks are being closed down because of lack of maintenance. The LNP pounded the streets of the Atherton Tablelands and Charters Towers saying, 'We care. Trust us. You can count on us.' Two shadow ministers walked into the neighbourhood centre and had their pictures taken, which were published in the paper. They said, 'We will look after you. We care about you. We assure you that this service will keep going.' What happened? On 30 June they received a letter saying that the service had been cut and their jobs were gone the next day.

I will read a list of some of the programs that are being cut in my electorate alone: the farm financial assistance office in the Tablelands, which provided a front-line service assisting farmers with the financial requirements of running small businesses; the closure of the Department of Transport office in Moranbah; the scaling back of industry workshops in Lotus Glen correctional facility, including the metal fabrication and tailoring; the closure of the Mareeba small mines office; the loss of lawn-mowing services provided by the Home Assist Secure, which will hit private enterprise that depends on those contracts; the loss of the Healthy Lifestyle Program at the Charters Towers Neighbourhood Centre—and that is where the two shadow ministers had their pictures taken which appeared in the paper before the election. They were saying, 'We will look after you.' My point is that these were sheer, blatant lies told to the people of Queensland setting the perception that they were going to be different.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ruthenberg): Order! Take your seat. The language you are using—'liar'—is very unparliamentary. I would ask that when you resume please apologise for that and then you can continue.

Mr KNUTH: What annoyed me is that as far as the eye could—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have asked you to withdraw the word 'liar' and not use it.

Mr KNUTH: Sorry, I withdraw the word 'liar'. As far as the eye could see, LNP members of parliament could be seen storming our streets. We saw billboards and continual mail-outs, day in and day out. I do not know where they got all the money for them from. They were saying, 'We will look after you. We will care. Trust us. We are going to be different.'

Mr Johnson: Shane, it was a different story when you were with us. Don't you forget it. Don't forget it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr KNUTH: Different, yes. You stand up for the railway employees, Vaughan. You stand up.

Mr Johnson: I know exactly what you said.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr KNUTH: You stand up for the railway employees.

Mr Johnson: I will stand up all right!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr KNUTH: Well, start doing it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member to address his comments through to chair.

Mr KNUTH: I apologise. The Public Service and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 seeks, among other things, to further reduce the credibility of the parliament, the parliamentary process and the committee system. I would like to read from some of the submissions, and I note that these comments could apply to any one of the 22 pieces of legislation introduced by this government. The Queensland Law Society stated that only three business days were provided for public submissions. The Queensland Council of Unions stated—

... stakeholders have been provided with less than one week to consider the amendments and prepare submissions ...

The United Firefighters Union of Australia stated—

We note that the Government stated no intentions to introduce any changes to the industrial laws as part of any pre-election platform.

We express disappointment about having just a matter of days to consider and make submissions about a surprise Bill.

In relation to the bill that we debated last night—600 pages of legislation—the government allowed four days for all of Queensland to make submissions. It had the audacity to tell us to leave our electorates to come down to Brisbane to have a public hearing when people did not even know it was being held. That is a waste of taxpayers' money. That is lack of accountability. We need accountability in this government. If those opposite want us to fly down here to attend a public hearing, we want to make sure that the people affected are going to be here at that public hearing. If they are not, it is a waste of taxpayers' money.

The list goes on, but I could be reading from the submissions by AgForce or the National Farmers Federation to legislation passed this week. Across-the-board, organisations and individuals, industries and communities, watch in shock and disbelief as this government storms through the parliamentary process and makes a mockery of the committee system and the democratic process of government. I have not pushed for this before but, having seen what has happened recently, I believe that we need an upper house in this state. I oppose this bill.