



Speech by

**Steve Davies**

**MEMBER FOR CAPALABA**

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## **PENALTIES AND SENTENCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (5.13 pm): I rise to speak to the Penalties and Sentences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill seeks to implement a number of beneficial amendments for the people of Queensland. The first of these amendments facilitates yet another of the election pledges of the Newman LNP government: to boost the funding of front-line police by increasing both the penalty unit value from its current level of \$100 to \$110 as well as implementing a nominal administration fee on all criminal justice matters where an offender is found guilty. This levy of \$300 for Supreme and District courts and \$100 for the Magistrates Court will add approximately \$12.6 million to the collected revenue while the increase in the penalty unit will add as much as \$22.5 million to the state's budget. This much needed money will be partly used to fund road safety education awareness programs while the bulk of the funds raised will be used principally to further bolster Queensland's front-line police.

Over the past few weeks I have had the privilege of meeting front-line police officers from a variety of different areas of policing—from the drug squad, from the major crime squad and from general duties. All of those police officers were patting me on the back. I felt quite pumped up. They were saying that they feel valued, they feel supported and that, as a government, we are a breath of fresh air after many years of feeling ignored by the previous administration.

This bill also includes a provision to amend the Industrial Relations Act 1999. This amendment is vital in the recovery of Queensland Health payroll overpayments that are paid after the amendment has commenced. This bill also provides appropriate rostering processes to minimise the risk of overpayments as well as underpayments for Queensland Health staff. The need for this amendment is a direct result of the previous government's—what can I say—debacle of the Queensland Health payroll implementation. It failed to manage, it failed to implement and it failed to make the payroll system work at all. As a businessperson who worked in the banking industry for many, many years, the banking industry often rolled out different computer programs to facilitate banking processes. I never saw anything like this. The bank that I worked for would often run processes in parallel for months and months, if not for years, to make sure that the system that it was implementing worked correctly. Unfortunately, that was not the way it was done for the implementation of the Health payroll. Obviously, it all went to billyo after that. There have been many rumours in my electorate about why this happened—ranging from the fact that the previous government did not want to pay a million dollars to renew the contract on the old payroll system; hence it did not run it in parallel to a number of other different things. My question is: why will the opposition not simply release the cabinet documents? Why will the Leader of the Opposition not allow the public to understand the process? Why did it go live? Why did all of these things happen? Honestly, it is just beyond comprehension that it can go live with a system that affects 85,000 Queensland Health workers. We need to let the sunshine in. We need to let the dark period of the operation of the Queensland Health payroll come to light. I ask the opposition: what has it got to hide? Why will the opposition not release the documents? Why will it not make them available?

This legislation will provide the mechanism that, once an overpayment is identified, there will be a clear two-week gap before the deductions commence. The deductions will be limited to 25 per cent of payable earnings, meaning that people will not be left in the lurch from week to week. These two weeks allows employees the opportunity to raise any concerns about the accuracy of the overpayments as well as issues such as hardship or any other issue that may affect the recovery of that money.

Finally, this bill provides a longer 10-day period—from the end of the roster to the pay date—rather than the current three-day period for the processing of the payroll. This extension of time will surely give the people who operate the Health payroll, who I dare say are going through a terrible time with the enormous pressure that they must be under, the time to deal with this system. We will be providing a loan to help people transition to that new process. That will enable people who work for Queensland Health to manage their funds. I commend this legislation to the House. I think it will be a great thing.