




Speech by

Steve Davies

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

Hansard Thursday, 15 November 2012

GUARDIANSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (12.11 pm): I rise in support of the Guardianship and Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Firstly, I commend the Attorney-General for the great job he is doing as Attorney-General, not just in terms of this bill but the role of Attorney-General in general. He has done a fantastic job and continues to do a fantastic job in that role. This bill continues this government's legacy of keeping election promises by implementing cost-saving measures that this state badly needs as a result of the previous government's poor financial management. This bill, firstly, creates the Public Advocate as a statutory authority and I am pleased to see the Attorney-General acting on behalf of some of Queensland's most disadvantaged. Tackling these issues takes fortitude, something that the previous government sadly lacked. We on this side of the House believe that spending more does not necessarily lead to better outcomes. Previous programs that previous governments undertook that included pipes without dams and dams without pipes and a Health payroll disaster that is almost beyond comprehension are evidence that just throwing bucketloads of money does not give good outcomes.

This government takes a new approach. We are streamlining processes and increasing the independence of institutions to allow for improvements so that government and non-government organisations can deliver services to Queensland's most vulnerable. The Public Advocate will be given two key additional powers to strengthen its ability to perform its role. The first will be to allow the Public Advocate to access information or documents that the Public Advocate currently does not have access to so that the Public Advocate may be better informed when undertaking the systems advocacy function. The second will be to allow the Public Advocate to report at times on system issues and requires the Attorney-General to table the reports in parliament. This will ensure closer ties to the responsible minister to have better oversight of the tasks and allow greater working relationships.

We are also cognisant of the importance of privacy in these matters. When dealing with members of our community, it is crucial that the people's right to privacy is maintained. That is why the provisions that are designed to protect the confidentiality of any personal information collected during this process have been closely considered and included. The bill is designed to support and advocate for those who cannot make sound decisions on their own. It is vitally important that all Queenslanders have their rights guarded by strong institutional frameworks, especially those who experience impaired decision making. By making these necessary changes, we are giving the Public Advocate the power it needs in order to carry out its role as a strong and independent advocate for those who need it most. It is crucially important that we restore permanency in the role of the Public Advocate, and this is an important step to getting Queensland back on track.

The second part of the bill that I want to speak to are the changes to the Electoral Act 1992. Another pleasing objective of this bill is to remove the administration funding for political parties and Independent members. The LNP has made some very tough decisions in its short tenure to restore Queensland's dire financial predicament. At a time when Queensland was being subjected to record debt and record deficits, the previous government thought it justified to increase payments to political parties. We on this side of the

House cannot abide by that and we cannot stand by and watch money being spent on things that will not go to help Queenslanders who are doing it tough. It is very interesting that we as a party have done this. It shows great courage and great initiative. It is also interesting that the media really has not picked up on this. It is often said that those in parliament have their snouts in the trough, but the initiative by the Attorney-General to cut this funding is a clear example that the LNP is not tarred with that brush.

The bill removes administrative funding for political parties and Independent members under the Electoral Act 1992 as provided for under part 11 division 5 of the Electoral Act 1992. Let me remind the House that the LNP stands to reap the best rewards from the current arrangements. There can be no question about the integrity of the decision of the LNP to lose \$2 million. This is just another example of the lengths that this government will go to to ensure a fair go for all and is part of the government's agenda for getting Queensland back on track. I commend the Attorney and commend the bill to the House.