




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

**INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (MANDATORY CODE OF PRACTICE FOR
OUTWORKERS) REPEAL NOTICE: DISALLOWANCE MOTION**

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (8.54 pm): I am sorry to disappointment those of you who thought the Attorney-General was up next. You still have one of us to go. I rise to speak in support of the Leader of the Opposition's motion to disallow the repealing of the clothing outworker code of practice. Let us take time to remind ourselves why this code was introduced. The previous Labor government introduced this code to help expose the complex contracting arrangements that have enabled bosses involved in the clothing industry to avoid their obligations to staff. The code was designed to make the industry more transparent by introducing important reporting obligations on everyone involved in the production chain. This means that everyone involved in the production of clothing, such as employers, suppliers, retailers and outworkers, can be formally identified. By improving transparency in this issue dodgy employers who do the wrong thing will be more easily identified. Furthermore, the code also protects those employers who do the right thing because it exposes the poor practices of their competitors.

I would now like to make comment about some of the remarks that have been made during tonight's debate. Firstly I will address some of the statements from those opposite including the member for Ipswich. In his contribution the member referred to the code as, if I recall correctly, a labyrinth of regulation. He went on to call this code another layer of regulation. Clearly the member does not understand the heart of the issue involving the exploitation of clothing outworkers. It is the lack of regulation in this industry that allows dodgy bosses to continue to exploit workers. This code was implemented to allow industrial inspectors to follow the paper trail to the dodgy operators. Without this code these operators will continue to be able to avoid detection and therefore avoid prosecution.

It is also worthwhile noting that dozens of industrial inspectors were among the 14,000 government workers who were sacked by the LNP last year. Further, the LNP should acknowledge that this code is already followed by many good operators. The presence of this code actually protects the good operators and exposes those who are prepared to cut corners and exploit workers.

I want to move now to the comments made by the member for Broadwater. There was a suggestion that this motion was some kind of stunt. The next member we will hear from, the Attorney-General, knows all about stunts. It is only a day since the Attorney-General, the minister responsible for this code, came into this chamber and wasted more than 30 minutes of this parliament's time on a puerile motion that was nothing more than a diversion. Now, when you suspend standing orders as a distraction from the bad government story of the day, that is called a stunt. The same cannot be said when you move a disallowance motion within the standing orders. Such a thing is not a stunt but, of course, that is what the LNP suggests that it is. It was such a stunt though that we gave those opposite two weeks notice that we were doing it.

The member for Ipswich West referred to the code as unnecessary red tape. This is where the views of the LNP and Labor will always diverge. It is something I have mentioned previously in this chamber. The LNP considers the protection of workers as simply red tape. That is not Labor's way. We are proud of that. Labor will stick up for workers, particularly some of the most vulnerable workers who are often subject to exploitation. Labor also acknowledges that many bosses do the right thing by their workers even in the clothing industry, but surely the member and the LNP are not so naïve as to think that there are no problems in the clothing industry. If they do, they really do need to get out more.

This code is not red tape. It is an important protection for some of the most vulnerable workers in our society. I listened to the LNP contributions tonight and not once did I hear anyone express any empathy for the plight of clothing outworkers. I ask the members for electorates like Logan, Waterford, Algester, Springwood and Albert, the members for Stretton and Sunnybank and all the members of the LNP in this place whether they have actually considered that the Attorney-General's position is harming people in their electorates? These members will have been elected in the Newman wave, but guess what? The tide will go out just as quickly for those members if they do not stand up for workers in their local area. People do not forget things like this. It is clear that there was no consultation with anyone involved in clothing outworkers—not the workers themselves, not churches helping those workers or the FairWear Campaign. Surely if there was there would have been a little bit more concern for these workers. Instead the LNP was more interested in tossing around figures about red tape and regulation.

I can reassure all members that the women working for \$7 an hour or less are not concerned about red tape. They are more concerned about getting a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. Maybe if the Attorney-General did a fair day's work he might understand what that is about. That is what Labor is concerned about. Labor is prepared to stand up against the LNP's ongoing attacks on the rights of workers in Queensland and fight for the rights of clothing outworkers. I support this disallowance motion, just as I support the working people of Queensland.