




Speech By
Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Record of Proceedings, 15 October 2013

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND REHABILITATION AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (12.16 pm): I rise to oppose the motion put forward by the Attorney-General. This is another example of this government's callous approach to attempt to govern this state. We know that they have run roughshod over the committee system time and time again, but never has there been a more blatant example of it than going over the top of a committee which was given a task to look at the workers compensation scheme here in Queensland and which, quite frankly, has been ignored.

Every one of recommendations that were put forward were put forward on the basis of submissions that had come before the committee—more than 240 submissions and more than 13 public hearings. Again and again this Attorney-General suggests that he knows better than all of those people who submitted. He thinks he knows better than people who have been involved in this field for decades. He thinks he knows better than everyone else in the entire world it seems.

This is completely disappointing. Introducing legislation to strip workers of their rights to workers compensation is a slap in the face to this parliament. It is a slap in the face to the MPs of both sides of politics who gave very clear instructions as to what they thought the changes should be. It is a slap in the face, as we said, to the committee and to all of those people who have put forward recommendations and suggestions.

The member for Coomera did a stellar job of chairing this committee, and it is very important to note that this committee presented a report that was unanimous. There was no dissenting report and no statement of reservations. It was a report that was talked through at length carefully. It was very carefully looked at to ensure that we as a committee got the balance right. This again is another approach by this government to destroy any semblance of an independent committee system here in this state.

Let us just recap for a moment. We have the best workers compensation scheme in the country for now. But unfortunately what is now fair and sustainable—

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Manager of Opposition Business ought not be prosecuting the issue. The issue at hand is the urgent debate. That is what he should be debating, not the issue of debate but the actual urgency of the debate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! I ask the Manager of Opposition Business to address his comments to the urgency of the debate.

Mr PITT: Yet again, Mr Deputy Speaker, the Attorney-General shows that he does not want anyone having an alternative point of view so I will confine my comments to the urgency motion.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms Palaszczuk: You had your go.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Manager of Opposition Business has the call.

Mr PITT: It is very clear that Queenslanders have a concern about this particular minister—this Attorney-General's approach to the committee system and his so-called urgency motions on plenty of bills. If anyone deserves more scrutiny, if anyone deserves the fine detail of what is being proposed to be gone through in greater detail, it is this Attorney-General. This is all about making sure that this is not a rushed job. We know what is coming. There are going to be other bills introduced today which will not only be rushed through this sitting of parliament but we understand will be rushed through today.

This response is all about this government's agenda and no correspondence will be entered into. No wonder it is becoming known as the know-it-all Newman government. The reason there is a committee system and why we should not be pushing urgency motions through all the time is quite simply because scrutiny of legislation is important. Alternative points of view are important. The urgency motion before the House is about this Attorney-General's ability to slip through the cracks, to try to pretend that he should not be held up to the same level of accountability as other people. Quite frankly, he is a disgrace. He should hang his head in shame. This legislation should be given more airing, as should the other legislation which we expect will be introduced today. Quite frankly, this Attorney-General is not listening. He has not listened to what ReachTEL polls have said about the number of people who support—

Mr Bleijie: Ha, ha!

Mr PITT: He has not listened to what people have said in this state about making sure we have a fair and equitable workers compensation scheme. Let me be very clear: in terms of this legislation we will not be debating what is contained in it because we want a chance to have a look at it. Mind you, we will not have the opportunity to dissect it as much as we would otherwise do if this was not being pushed through as an urgency motion. I will say this: any future Labor government will reverse any of the changes being proposed by this absolutely disgraceful Attorney-General. People should be left in no uncertain terms that this opposition will be opposing this every single step of the way.