




Speech By
Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.35 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 for a particular purpose. I table the bill and the explanatory notes.

Tabled paper: Parliament of Queensland Amendment Bill 2013 [\[3440\]](#).

Tabled paper: Parliament of Queensland Amendment Bill 2013, explanatory notes [\[3441\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Parliament of Queensland Amendment Bill 2013. The trust between a member of parliament and their constituents should be considered a very important one, and one of the most important duties of a member is to attend the sittings of their parliament so as to participate in its proceedings and give representation to the views and aspirations of their constituents. In recent times in this House, concern has been raised regarding the absences of the member of Redcliffe. While members of parliament cannot be expected to be immune from illness, or other legitimate factors that may prevent them from attending a sitting day, there need to be adequate rules in place to ensure that members reasonably account for their absences.

The Committee of the Legislative Assembly has undertaken a review of the current provisions for dealing with the absences of members, and on 11 September 2013 Madam Speaker tabled report No. 9 of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly titled *Absence from the House and vacating of seats by members*. In this report, the CLA has found that a tightening of the current provisions is required and has recommended that amendments to section 72(1)(m) of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and standing orders 263A and 263B should be progressed. The government supports the CLA's recommendation and this bill proposes to amend the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, while the amendments to the standing rules and orders were progressed by the Leader of the House earlier today.

Section 72 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 outlines the circumstances under which a member's seat becomes automatically vacant. These circumstances include if a member fails to take his or her seat within 21 sitting days after being elected, if a member stops being enrolled on the electoral roll, if a member stops being an Australian citizen, or if a member is convicted of certain offences. Section 72(1)(m) of the act currently provides that a member's seat becomes automatically vacant if the member is absent without the Assembly's permission for more than 21 consecutive sitting days, whether over one or more sessions. The government supports the reduction of the number of consecutive sitting days to 12 sitting days and the bill provides for an amendment to section 72(1)(m) accordingly.

The bill is not intended to act retrospectively and will only include sitting days for which a member is absent after the bill's assent. The House agreed to an amendment to standing order 263B

earlier today that reflects this change, and standing order 263B now provides a mechanism for the House to grant a member leave of absence up to or beyond 12 consecutive sitting days.

As honourable members know, standing order 263A has also been amended to require members to notify the Speaker in writing, and provide a medical certificate or any other evidence that is acceptable to the Speaker, if a member intends to be absent from the Legislative Assembly for more than four consecutive sitting days. These are all sensible reforms, and I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.39 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Declared Urgent; Allocation of Time Limit Order

Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.39 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 137 the Parliament of Queensland Amendment Bill be declared an urgent bill to enable the bill to be passed through all remaining stages at this day's sitting.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Second Reading

Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.40 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.