



Speech By **Hon. Jarrod Bleijie**

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 19 November 2013

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (FAIR WORK ACT HARMONISATION NO. 2) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (8.43 pm), in reply: I start by thanking all honourable members for their contribution to the debate this evening, and what a good debate it was. Can I say in relation to the objectives of the bill that I set out earlier that this was all about making sure that we can harmonise as much as possible with the federal legislation. There are some differences—I acknowledge that—which I will get to in a minute.

The bill responds to the recommendations, as I said earlier, of the Queensland Commission of Audit and the Blueprint for Better Healthcare in Queensland. In particular, the Commission of Audit recommended that the Industrial Relations Act be updated to ensure it is modern, flexible and relevant to the public sector—that was recommendation 130; that awards continue to provide the basis for public sector wages and conditions—however, only matters not covered by legislation or Public Service directives should be included; and that certified agreements only contain wages and conditions for specific groups of employees which are outside award conditions and which are linked to improvements in productivity and performance. All certified agreements are to be approved by the Public Service Commission.

I want to talk about some of the contributions from honourable members, particularly the Leader of the Opposition, who I note surprisingly is opposing this legislation. The opposition leader and other opposition members have indicated they are opposing the legislation. I think they are opposing it because the opposition leader referenced a few things in her speech—mainly unions, sticking up for the rights of the unions. It is not about workers' rights or public servants' rights; it is all about the unions. Of course we know that at this time of year the opposition leader is flying around Queensland announcing all sorts of preselections all over the place. So any support that the opposition leader can give to any particular unions in this state—tick a box because, as long as the unions are positively mentioned in this place, preselections depend on it, even for the member for Woodridge sitting over there, who we know—

Mrs Scott interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: Have you been preselected yet, because the talk of the town is that Cameron Dick is coming for Woodridge? Cameron Dick is coming for Woodridge. But I have also heard the member for Woodridge wants to hang in there and does not just want to give it to Cameron Dick. I have heard that the member for Rockhampton might be in a little bit of trouble because for the last 18 months he has not shown much competence in his role, such an important role, as shadow minister for police. How can you have a shadow minister for police advocating for police and opposing juvenile justice reforms and boot camps in his own electorate?

So we know that for the Labor Party, for the seven opposite, it is all about the unions. It is all about the unions in this state. On that note, when the opposition leader was talking about this bill she

made sure she ticked all the boxes for the preselections. So Alex Scott got a mention. Beth Mohle of the Nurses Union got a mention. I was listing the unions as she was speaking. I had a big box there. I wrote at the top 'Inala preselection—Labor preselections depend on the following unions'. The Nurses Union got a mention by the opposition leader—tick. Alex Scott got a mention—tick. We know that they would have been outside at the rally this afternoon.

Incidentally, talking about the rally this afternoon and all the different types of people out there, there were a couple of hundred people out there—the same couple of hundred who were there a few weeks ago and the same couple of hundred who were there 12 months ago. But what I have noticed with the union protest is that the numbers are getting fewer and fewer. The membership of the union protest out the front is in steep decline. We know that as the opposition leader flies around the state and announces all these recycled candidates like Kerry Shine, for goodness sake, for Toowoomba—all these recycled has-beens—

Ms Palaszczuk: Oh, wait for Kawana. I've got a good one for you.

Mr BLEIJIE: They said 'wait for Kawana' in 2012. They threw up a fellow from Brisbane, so I am still waiting. I am still waiting. I say to the Labor Party I think they have their priorities wrong in this state.

The opposition leader said in the paper 18 months ago, when she became the opposition leader, that the Labor Party of Queensland need to 'renew and refresh'. 'They got it so wrong,' she said. 'They got it so wrong.' So the renewal and the refreshing and the reinvigoration of the Labor Party is to recycle all the people who got them into trouble in the first place—like the Kerry Shines of the world. There are some other former members—

Mr Minnikin: Where's Peter?

Mr BLEIJIE: Well, Peter Beattie—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order, members!

Mr BLEIJIE: 'Smart State 1' might just run for Bundamba perhaps. 'Smart State 1' may run for Bundamba.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. There is too much noise. Order, those on my left!

Mr BLEIJIE: I was going to say that—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! Those on my left!

Mr BLEIJIE:—the Labor Party in Queensland might rehash a couple of the recycled federal Labor candidates, and I note they already have. One candidate in one particular area—I think it may be Burleigh—is a recycled federal Labor candidate. We also have Kerry Shine sitting out there, who made some very unpleasant remarks about women victims many years ago. For the Labor Party that espouses the rights—

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: The member for Bundamba will want to hear this. For the Labor Party that espouses the rights of women to preselect Kerry Shine, considering the remarks he made some years ago about women who were raped in this state, I think is testament—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Attorney-General, resume your seat. The Attorney-General will return to the bill, please.

Mr BLEIJIE: If I may explain, the correlation between what I am talking about and the bill is industrial relations, jobs and opportunities, and renewal of the industrial relations sector—and, of course, members of parliament are elected. I make the point that in her presentation tonight the opposition leader was talking very much about unions and the role that unions play. We know that the opposition leader could not care less for workers' rights in Queensland; it is about Alex Scott and the other unions and what is in it for them. The opposition leader talked about what this government has done in the last 18 months in the space of union accountability. Everything we have done about union accountability has been to empower grassroots members of the Public Service to discover information about their unions that has been withheld from them for many years. For most of her contribution, the Labor opposition leader spoke about the industrial relations accountability legislation that we passed some months ago. While the opposition leader drew attention to that, let me draw attention to it.

Tonight we have had the union heavyweights protesting and speaking about workers' rights and the opportunities for workers in Queensland. When they were on the microphones at the rally tonight talking about workers' rights and the pay of workers in Queensland did they say that they, the union thugs, are some of the most highly paid individuals in the state of Queensland? Did Alex Scott tell the workers outside that he was on over \$200,000 a year? In all the protests that he has participated in over the last year did Alex Scott say that he spent \$120,000 on Facebook advertising for the union? No! Did Alex Scott or other union officials stand up in front of a camera and say, 'We don't want union members, grassroots members, to know what we get up to. So we are going to set up a capitalist company, a corporation, to hide from the government's legislation and filter members' money to this company'? The legislature was then forced to change the legislation to stop that happening.

The unions in Queensland do not want to be accountable. They have never been accountable and they do not want to be. By association, the Labor Party are condemned for that inability of accountability because those seven members opposite rely on the preselections and the union support. Members will find this particularly interesting. The Labor Party federally have just re-established their new structure to elect their federal leader. They go and vote. The majority of members vote but then they are still outnumbered by the lesser members of the federal parliamentary wing despite—

Ms PALASZCZUK: I rise to a point of order. This has nothing at all to do with the bill before the House. He is talking about federal elections.

Mr BLEIJIE: I was referring to comments made by the opposition leader.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am listening to the Attorney-General. He has returned to the bill. The Attorney-General has the call.

Mr BLEIJIE: It is fine for the opposition leader to take a point of order now. However, for most of her contribution she spoke about the industrial accountability legislation that was passed some time ago and union accountability. I am now responding to the debate conducted by the Leader of the Opposition. Talking about the new structure for the Labor Party, the federal leader is voted in by a majority of the members, but then the federal Labor politicians, who did not actually receive a high numbers of votes, still end up choosing their leader. Interestingly, the opposition leader was quoted a week or two ago on this matter and on whether Queensland Labor should have the same system of election. Yes, the opposition leader agreed but with one fundamental change: the unions should have a say in the election of the Queensland Labor Party leader. They do not at the federal level, but now at the state level the opposition leader, Ms Annastacia Palaszczuk, the member for Inala, says that the unions have to be involved in this process. Is it any wonder then that the Labor Party opposition leader and those opposite come in here tonight bragging about how great all these union leaders are, because their preselections are coming up? They all should stand condemned for coming into this place and hiding under the guise of workers' rights because all they are on about is their own jobs and the jobs of the militant union thugs in this state of Queensland, who are getting paid much more than all the members, who want to hide their money and who have no accountability, no transparency and no integrity. That is what the Labor Party is on about.

Mr Byrne interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: If he has not faced his preselection already, Mr Byrne, the member for Rockhampton, will face the challengers of the unions. The advice to the member for Rockhampton is this: if you have not worked out the Labor Party already, if the unions do not like you, you are not going to last. The only reason the member for Bundamba has lasted is because she spoke out against asset sales, otherwise the member for Bundamba would have been on the chopping block. The member for Bundamba was on the chopping block until she came in here and made a speech about how great the ETU was, 'I don't agree with asset sales. Anna Bligh has got it wrong. Andrew Fraser has got it wrong. The state Labor Party has got it wrong.' That is the reason the member for Bundamba survived a preselection. The member for Bundamba has been challenged before for preselection and survived.

Mrs Miller: Always won.

Mr BLEIJIE: 'Always won,' she says, but there is always next time.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: Let's hope the member for Bundamba gets what she deserves in terms of preselection and gets booted out of the Labor Party preselection because she is incompetent. The member for Bundamba is incompetent. The member for Bundamba has no future in any senior

position in the Queensland Labor Party. The member for Bundamba should stand condemned in this place.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: She has no future and no worthwhile opportunity in this parliament. The member for Bundamba makes no worthwhile contribution in this place. The people of Bundamba should stand up at the next election and send the member for Bundamba packing.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: She abuses the processes of this parliament—absolutely abuses the processes of this parliament. She is incompetent but, as someone famously once said, everyone rises to their level of incompetence. The member for Bundamba rose to that level many years ago.

Honourable members interjected.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. The Attorney-General has the call.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Bundamba.

Mr Shorten: Which one?

Mr BLEIJIE: There were many. I cannot recall which one, but I take them all. If the member for Bundamba has shown anything, particularly to new members in this House, it is how not to be an elected official in this place, how not to advocate for her constituents in this place. If there is one thing about all these people on this side—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members, there are too many interjections.

Mr BLEIJIE:—of the House, if there is one thing about the LNP on this side, we do not come into this place owing favours to militant union thugs.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members will cease interjecting.

Mr BLEIJIE: We do not have preselections depending on militant union thugs like the ETU.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left!

Mr BLEIJIE: The ETU relies on the support of the member for Bundamba and the member for Bundamba relies on the support of the ETU. That is what this debate is about. It is not about the workers' right for the member for Bundamba, it is not about the workers' right for the Labor Party; it is about your job. That is all you care about, member for Bundamba.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General will direct his comments through the chair, please.

Mr BLEIJIE: Absolutely. I now turn to other contributions from honourable members this evening. The Labor Party came into this place and said that this is not about harmonised laws. I would not ordinarily positively admit to this, but a lot of these laws are copies of federal Labor laws. Perhaps I stand condemned for bringing such legislation into this place. If the federal Labor Party understood that unions' roles in the workplace are not as they should have been, then so should the Queensland Labor Party. If Rudd and Gillard can understand it, why can't Mrs Miller, the member for Bundamba? If Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd can understand it, why can't you?

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! Order! The Attorney-General will take his seat. The member for Bundamba will withdraw those comments. They are unparliamentary.

Mrs MILLER: I withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: So as I was saying, the Leader of the Opposition comes into this place and talks about workers' rights, goes out onto the stage in protest with a few hundred people out in front of the House, but never has the courage to tell the people of Queensland what this is really about. I suspect there are dodgy deals between the Labor Party of Queensland and unions in this state. Across Australia we have seen dodgy deals with the Labor Party.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the member for Bundamba's interjection. Let me explain it a little for you. Have you heard—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Attorney will speak to the chair.

Mr BLEIJIE:—of the HSU? Has the member for Bundamba heard of the HSU?

Mrs Miller: Have you ever heard of Scott Driscoll?

Mr BLEIJIE: Have you heard of the HSU, the Health Services Union? Has the member for Bundamba heard of the HSU and the scandal surrounding that particular union? Has the member for Bundamba heard about—

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections!

Mr BLEIJIE:—Craig Thomson? Has the member for Bundamba heard about Big Bill Ludwig and the \$50,000 of union members' money that paid for his personal legal fees? Has the member for Bundamba heard about the union spending over \$100,000 in travel?

Mr Emerson: Have they heard of Gordon Nuttall?

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes, I take the interjection from the honourable transport minister, who tells me about Gordon Nuttall—

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections. Member for Bundamba—

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General will resume his seat. I warn the member for Bundamba under 253A for her incessant interjecting and not taking the guidance of the chair. The Attorney-General has the call.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the honourable minister for transport before I was rudely interrupted by the member for Bundamba. What was your interjection? Yes, that's right: Gordon Nuttall. The minister asked if the member for Bundamba had heard of Gordon Nuttall. I suspect so, because she was his parliamentary secretary. The member for Bundamba was the assistant to the corrupt former minister Gordon Nuttall. Interestingly, when the honourable Health minister was debating tonight and talking about the member for Bundamba being the former assistant to the corrupt former minister Gordon Nuttall, the member for Bundamba interjected. I recall this specifically because I was watching it, I heard it and I saw it. She said, 'And I was the assistant to Anna Bligh as well.' The member for Bundamba has such a proud history of serving one of the most failed premiers of this state. You will recall that Anna Bligh was the Treasurer who drove the state economy off the cliff in the first place before Andrew Fraser got hold of it. Then the member for Bundamba, not wanting to remember anything in history, stood up, made an interjection and so proudly said, 'And I was the assistant to Anna Bligh.' The member for Bundamba has not learned anything—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General will return to the bill.

Mr BLEIJIE: I cannot even remember what the bill is. I return now to the industrial relations harmonisation bill that we are debating tonight and the comments that the Leader of the Opposition was making. She was supporting unions and the dodgy deals that they do in Queensland and all the money they spend: \$120,000 on Facebook advertising; \$200,000 for the Nurses Union and the Teachers Union; hundreds of thousands of dollars in travel expenses across the state—the list goes on. In fact, I recall in parliament some time ago I read out a list of all the extreme expenses that the unions were spending in this state.

I raise it in this debate for quite a serious reason. We have union officials out there tonight, including Mr John Battams from the QCU, fighting for workers' rights—despite the fact that workers' rights are not being taken away—and fighting for all sorts of rights. There were people outside the front of this House tonight who wore masks and made threats to parliamentarians, and the Labor Party want to be associated with those types of people. My question to the Leader of the Opposition is: did you address the crowd tonight?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General will speak through the chair. I have asked you three times.

Mr BLEIJIE: Did the opposition leader address the crowd at the protest tonight? That is the question for the Leader of the Opposition, and I note that she does not want to answer it. She does not want to answer the question of whether she addressed the protest.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I am asking the question because there were people out there in masks tonight who are associated with a particular global organisation which threatens and intimidates people by the masks they wear and which has recently been the subject of some media attention in Queensland. The opposition leader wants to hold their hands, sing *Kumbaya* and be associated with those people, and I think that is shameful. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition should actually have a look at the crowd to see who is in it before she so blatantly and enthusiastically supports these types of rallies.

Interestingly, amongst some of the other people who I saw outside was Debbie Kilroy from Sisters Inside. I raise that because I had a meeting with Debbie Kilroy last week where she said that she would like to work in a cooperative arrangement with the government on reforms in the prison sector and that she wanted to have a good working relationship with the government, but then she stands outside with the protesters and says all sorts of nasty things about the government. What sort of cooperative arrangement is that?

Mr Kempton: It is the Labor way!

Mr BLEIJIE: It is the Labor way! I take the interjection. I think what the member for Cook means is that the Labor way is a flip flop way. They say one thing to your face, and then they turn around and say something completely different to someone else. I suspect that what the Leader of the Opposition would tell the protesters there tonight is different than when she goes into a room with union heavyweights and thugs and talks about who is going to be preselected and who owes who which favours. You cannot tell me that a recycled Kerry Shine did not get there because union heavyweight faction warlords want him there. The member for Burleigh is in the House tonight. As I understand it, member for Burleigh, the Labor Party have preselected someone for your electorate who is a recycled federal Labor Party candidate; is that correct?

Mr Hart: Failed Labor candidate!

Mr BLEIJIE: Ha, ha! So we have the member for Burleigh who now has running against him a failed Labor Party federal candidate; we have the member for Cook sitting there who now has a failed Labor federal candidate running against him. Where is the talent pool in the Labor Party? Show us the talent! Because it is not sitting in the Woodridge seat; it is not sitting in the Rockhampton seat; and it is certainly not sitting in the Inala—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General will resume his seat. The Attorney-General will return to the bill.

Mr BLEIJIE: The point that I am making is that all honourable members should recall the contribution from the Leader of the Opposition, because I fear—

A government member: You do not fear anything!

Mr BLEIJIE: I do not fear anything! I suspect it is one of the last contributions that the opposition leader will be making as the opposition leader in the state of Queensland, because we know the word around town is that Woodridge has had the knock on the door from Cameron Dick, and Cameron Dick is coming through and the opposition leader is buying time. If honourable members want to know the rationale for my assessment, is it any wonder why the opposition leader only last week stood up in front of a camera and said, 'We should reform how Labor leaders are elected, but we want to make sure the unions have a say in the leadership election of the Queensland Labor Party.' That is quite different from the federal Labor leadership.

I do feel a little sorry for the opposition leader, because I know that the six sitting behind her want the job but they know they cannot have the job because they are too incompetent. The only one who can really do the job is sitting outside the chamber.