




Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

TREASURY AND TRADE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (12.44 pm): I move—
That the bill be now read a second time.

I would like to thank the Finance and Administration Committee for its report that was tabled on 8 August 2013 regarding the Treasury and Trade and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. I am pleased to note that the committee recommends that the bill be passed. They have also made another two recommendations, which are recommendations two and three of their report. I will deal with those two recommendations now.

The committee's second recommendation is that I provide a comment on how historical information will be retained with the abolition of the requirement to publish quarterly financial reports in the *Government Gazette*. People will know that this government is moving into the 21st century. The gazette is going to be one of those items of historical interest. Previously it was used to inform people about things pertaining to government, whether that was jobs, tenders or other government information. We know that, in the 21st century, people do hit the net far more often than they read the *Government Gazette*.

We are now moving information to a domain where it will be publicly available for anyone with access to the internet. One of those parcels of information that we will be making available is the government's quarterly report. That information will continue to be made available. The historical information will continue to remain available and the quarterly information will remain available. In the *Government Gazette*, in which the last quarterly information is to be provided, notice will be provided to those people who do read the gazette that in the future they need to look to the government and the Treasury website to deal with that.

The proposed amendment in section 22(5) of the Financial Accountability Act 2009 contained in this bill will only impact the quarterly Consolidated Fund statements. The annual Consolidated Fund financial report, which Treasurers traditionally table around September or October, will continue to be prepared, audited by the Auditor-General and tabled in the parliament for all to see. As I say, we have also made that commitment to retain all of the previous quarterly statements on the website, not just the most recent quarterly statement. To ensure that members of the public know where to find the statements, a link to these will be included in the annual Consolidated Fund financial report, which is the one that I tabled, along with a statement that a copy of the quarterly statement can be provided to a member of the public on request to Queensland Treasury and Trade. So if they want a hard copy, all they need to do is let us know and we will provide that to them, but the information will continue to be available.

The committee's third recommendation is that I advise whether motorised scooters are included under the definition of 'motorised wheelchairs' in the gratuitous insurances arrangements contained in the proposed amendments to section 33(3) of the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994. This is to do with the registration and use of motorised scooters by people who have mobility requirements that are supported by those particular devices. Although not defined specifically in the Motor Accident Insurance Regulation 2004, the current gratuitous CTP insurance arrangements covering motorised

wheelchairs operate in tandem with the registration requirements for these vehicles. We currently provide gratuitous compulsory third-party insurance for people when they register despite the fact that they actually do not pay a CTP fee.

The term 'motorised wheelchair' is defined in the Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Vehicle Registration) Regulation 2010—that would be conveniently abridged to the TORUM—VR Regulation 2010—as a motor vehicle that is designed and built for use by a seated person with mobility difficulties that is not capable of going faster than 10 kilometres per hour, that has a tare of not more than 150 kilograms and that is not propelled by an internal combustion engine. In Queensland, a motorised wheelchair can only be used on footpaths or other road related areas if it is registered, and CTP insurance is provided gratuitously if the motorised wheelchair is registered, as I explained previously.

Motorised scooters designed for use by people with a mobility impairment equivalent to a wheelchair would fit under the definition of a motorised wheelchair for the purposes of motor vehicle registration and gratuitous CTP cover provided these vehicles meet the specific eligibility criteria outlined in the TORUM—VR Regulation 2010, which I mentioned previously. I can see, Mr Deputy Speaker, that you are enthralled by me trailing through the operations of the TORUM legislation, and I know there are many TORUM bills. I am sure that the Treasury spokesman for the opposition will be equally enthralled as he trawls through this part of it.

In consultation with the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel, Queensland Treasury and Trade will further consider whether there is a need to reference the Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Vehicle Registration) Regulation 2010's definition of a motorised wheelchair in the Motor Accident Insurance Regulation 2004. That is a longhand way of saying that I think we are going to have a bit more of a look at it. But in the meantime, we are quite confident that the gratuitous CTP arrangements will continue to be in place for people who use motorised scooters. There is no intention to change anything in that and, if we need to clarify it, we will. I am pleased to table the government's response to the committee's report that is there for all to see.

Tabled paper: Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 31—Treasury and Trade and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013, government response [\[3395\]](#).

I will also be proposing amendments during the consideration in detail stage of the bill to the Industrial Relations Act 1999 on behalf of the Attorney-General. These amendments ensure that appropriate eligibility criteria are used for the appointment to the position of deputy president (court) of the Industrial Court of Queensland. The position of deputy president of the Industrial Court of Queensland was introduced in the Industrial Relations (Transparency and Accountability of Industrial Organisations) and Other Acts Amendment Act 2013, which provides that where previously the Industrial Court of Queensland had been constituted by the president sitting alone, the changes in the Industrial Relations (Transparency and Accountability of Industrial Organisations) and Other Acts Amendment Act 2013 provided for the appointment of a vice president (court) and deputy president (court) to the Industrial Court of Queensland.

These positions were to allow for the workload to be distributed between presidential members of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission and the Industrial Court of Queensland to improve the efficiency of both tribunals through better use of the existing membership. Effectively, we wanted to ensure that people with the appropriate qualifications would be able to handle matters before the Industrial Court of Queensland. Previously they were prohibited from doing so under the former legislation. This now broadens the number of people who can effectively hear matters, thus speeding up the process of the Industrial Court of Queensland.

Traditional provisions also provided that on commencement each of the persons who is a legally qualified deputy president of the QIRC was to be appointed the first deputy president (court) of the Industrial Court Queensland. The requirement for the deputy president (court) to be a local lawyer was not made clear in those changes. We are simply changing one of the criteria for the appointment of people to be deputy president (court) of the Industrial Relations Court. The proposed amendments clarify the eligibility criteria for appointments to the position of deputy president (court) and ensure a Queensland-centric focus to decisions concerning the Queensland economy and its industrial relations community.

The proposed amendments will establish that the Industrial Court of Queensland is constituted by the president, the vice-president (court), and, in addition, a deputy president (court) who is a local lawyer of at least five years standing, someone with experience and understanding of the laws here in Queensland and who qualifies. This will continue to allow for the distribution of the workload across the presidential members, while clarifying the eligibility criteria for appointment to the positions of deputy president (court).

These amendments have been circulated in my name and accompanied by explanatory notes. With that enthralling second reading speech, I commend the bill to the House.