




Speech By  
**Trevor Watts**

**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH**

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## **JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (3.25 pm): I rise to add my contribution to the debate on the Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. I would like to thank all the members of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and the secretariat, who do a great deal of work to make sure that legislation is thoroughly looked at prior to it coming into this place. I certainly congratulate the Attorney-General on looking at the report and adopting several of the recommendations that were put forward.

Put simply, this bill is all about tidying up acts to make them simpler and modernising definitions to ensure that our legal framework is up to date. The objective of the bill is to make miscellaneous amendments to 30 acts administered by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. Those amendments include improving the provisions concerning the operation of various commissions, courts, tribunals and registry processes. Further, they implement the model provisions to allow for accession to international conventions. That is particularly important for electronic funds transfers as it will make sure that our legislation is modern and up to date.

A passion of this government will also be addressed. This bill will implement red-tape reduction measures concerning boards and mechanisms for appointments. Red-tape reduction and removing unnecessary bureaucracy is something that the Newman government has been pursuing relentlessly since coming to office. I certainly thank the Attorney-General for looking at areas of red tape and duplication of bureaucracy in the portfolio that he administers and finding ways to reduce that burden, particularly as it might affect businesses and organisations that have to deal with various boards and other government bodies.

Very importantly, the amendments in this bill will improve the safety of people who suffer from or fear domestic violence. I think that this government has shown itself to be very strong on law and order reform. Certainly, it is our ambition to make sure that Queensland is not only one of the safest states in which to bring up children but also one of the safest states in which to live and work. Again, I think that these are important amendments that this Attorney-General has brought forward and they will be very good.

This bill clarifies that the Information Commissioner may publish the names of declared vexatious applicants. It will further update and clarify definitions and references and make some further technical amendments to 30 acts. In relation to the Information Commissioner, I think it is very important that we understand that people have to have a mechanism by which they can make complaints and that governments should provide that facility. But increasingly we see that this mechanism and other mechanisms of a similar nature are abused by particular people who have a particular axe to grind. That is not in the best interests of the wider community. In fact, that ties up government resources and ties up the government's ability to be able to run efficiently.

The provision allowing the Commissioner to deal more effectively with vexatious applicants is a good change. I think the taxpayer of Queensland appreciates the fact that the Attorney-General is trying to make sure that we have a system where there is a mechanism for people to take their

applications, but at the same time if someone is abusing that system that there is an opportunity for that to be taken away and their ability to tie up government resources is reduced.

I think the very fact that the opposition and the member for Nicklin are supporting this bill shows that there is nothing controversial in what the Attorney-General has put forward. I think it is a good bill that removes red tape, modernises definitions and makes sure that our legal framework and various other mechanisms that exist for administering the law in this state are up-to-date. I thank the Attorney-General, the committee and the secretariat for their work on this bill. It is a good commonsense bill. It must be because even the member for Nicklin suggested that it was. With the member for Nicklin, the Leader of the Opposition and the Attorney-General all agreeing that this is a good bill that makes good common sense and was needed to bring our definitions up-to-date, we can safely pass this one through the House. I commend the bill to the House.