




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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**PUBLIC SERVICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (CIVIL LIABILITY) AMENDMENT
BILL**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (4.20 pm): I rise to support the Public Service and Other Legislation (Civil Liability) Amendment Bill 2013. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our Premier, the Hon. Campbell Newman, and the Minister Assisting the Premier, the Hon. Glen Elmes, on bringing this bill to the parliament. I would also like to thank the chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, Mr Steve Davies MP, member for Capalaba, for his committee's recommendations in relation to this bill.

Again we see before the House a bill that delivers on our government's election promises. Our government has promised to revitalise front-line services. This bill will amend the Public Service Act 2008 and the Police Service Administration Act 1990 to provide protection of Public Service employees, police officers and other people like ambulance officers, doctors and nurses engaging in conduct in an official capacity. I would particularly like to reflect on the implications of this bill in relation to our dedicated Queensland Police force. This bill will allow Queensland Police Service employees to perform their daily duties without the fear of being held liable while conducting their official work duties.

As I said in this House only last night, we have an amazing police force. Our government is increasing the size of our police force in an attempt to reduce crime rates. As I mentioned in the House last night, this has been done very successfully on the Gold Coast. The crime rates there have reduced by 20 per cent. The increase in number of police on the beat is currently around 660.

This is what our government is about. We are a can-do government. We are about getting the state back on track and revitalising our front-line services. The way we are doing that is by bringing in good, solid, practical legislation that does not cost the state. I note in the explanatory notes that the cost to the government of this proposed legislation is nil. It is common sense that all those in this House would join in supporting the Premier and passing this bill.

I am very proud of the hard work of our police officers and what they do to keep our communities safe. Obviously, I am very proud of the local police officers from the Nanango electorate. I have spoken to numerous local police about the pressures of civil liability that they face in their everyday duties. This places unnecessary pressure on our police and can interfere with their decision making. Our police require protection against civil liability to ensure that they can get on with the job and focus on what is important—that is, keeping our community safe.

This bill reflects our government's commitment to support our police officers and public servants to work with legislative immunity against civil liability when engaging in conduct in their official capacity. Currently, Queensland police officers are only indemnified if they act in good faith and without gross negligence in circumstances that involve assisting people in emergency situations. This common-sense legislation broadens that and thank goodness for that.

Police perform a critical role within our community and are an essential emergency service. Therefore, our government needs to do everything it can to get out of their way and allow them to do what they do best which is protect our communities, protect our children, protect the elderly and protect the vulnerable.

Even though our police officers perform their duties professionally and in difficult and complex situations, properties can be damaged, claims of discrimination or defamation can be made and injuries can occur. It is distressing to note that again we have to legislate to ensure liability for these situations will transfer to the state. However, this is what we need to do in this day and age.

Our public servants are of high standing and are well-respected people within the community. These people form the fabric and the backbone of our communities, and it is important that they can go home each night to their families and feel certain that their daily job will not see them end up in our courts facing legal proceedings. Our public servants and police officers will no longer have to worry and stress that they will face these proceedings for engaging in conduct that would be seen as just their everyday duty.

I reiterate that this is a great example of our government delivering on another election promise—reviewing civil protections available to police officers and other public servants whilst performing their duties. This bill will be very beneficial to our public servants and will ensure that these hardworking people can get on with the job. I commend the bill to the House.