




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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AGENTS FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION BILL; DEBT COLLECTORS (FIELD AGENTS AND COLLECTION AGENTS) BILL; MOTOR DEALERS AND CHATTEL AUCTIONEERS BILL; PROPERTY OCCUPATIONS BILL

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (8.19 pm): I am proud to stand in this House to speak in support of the Agents Financial Administration Bill, the Debt Collectors (Field Agents and Collection Agents) Bill, the Motor Dealers and Chattel Auctioneers Bill 2013 and the Property Occupations Bill. I would like to congratulate and thank the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, the Hon. Jarrod Bleijie, for bringing these bills before the House. I would also like to thank the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, chaired by Ian Berry, the member for Ipswich, for reviewing the bill. I note that the committee recommends that the bills be passed.

Once again, our Newman government is bringing legislation before the House that reduces—and significantly in this case—red tape and government involvement within industry. These changes will benefit the property agents, motor dealers, auctioneers and commercial agents sectors while maintaining appropriate protection for consumers. Industry groups will now benefit from having legislation and obligations that are specific to their line of business. In addition, the creation of industry specific acts will mean that the government can be more responsive to marketplace changes in each industry if any future regulatory reforms are required in these particular areas. Our government is also very conscious of ensuring that consumers are adequately protected. Therefore, importantly, the reforms are aimed at striking the appropriate balance between promoting efficiencies for business all whilst maintaining appropriate consumer protection. The reforms ensure that significant safeguards and limits are still in place to protect the community.

Whether it is buying a house or a car, it is one of the biggest decisions that we can make in our lifetime. The simpler that we can make that process, the greater Queenslanders are protected. Often consumers were overwhelmed by the hideous number of pages that had built up over years and years and years of Labor government so they just used to sign on the dotted line without reading the fine print. Industry feedback has told us that the process confused consumers, cost buyers money and also cost sellers money. With that in mind, the legislation is being simplified and split to make buying and selling property and cars easier for consumers. We are reducing the number of approved government forms and incorporating warning statements into contracts. That is some of the common-sense red-tape reduction that our government is all about.

Appropriately, the introduction of these bills follows extensive consultation with the industry and has been a long time coming. The recommendation to split the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act into occupation specific legislation was made back in 2008. Labor introduced the legislation in November 2010, but, interestingly, four years after the recommendation the bills lapsed.

Unlike those opposite, this government has worked hard to complete the task as part of its commitment to reduce red tape by 20 per cent over six years. This legislation also fulfils one of our election commitments to incorporate the PAMDA warning statement into the contract, removing

unnecessary duplication from the buying process. Although that may have taken some time, we wanted to get this right. Unlike those opposite, we not only wanted to split the existing legislation, we wanted to make sure that we could modernise and clarify it whilst reducing red tape in the process. This getting settings right approach is consistent with our pledge to grow a four-pillar economy based on tourism, agriculture, resources and construction and property.

I would like now to speak further about some key points of the bills, particularly in relation to red-tape reduction. The Property Occupations Bill will provide a simpler licensing framework for real estate agents, residential letting agents and real property auctioneers. It reduces red tape and regulation that adds a cost burden to both sides of the ledger—the industry and the consumers. As I mentioned earlier, the bill also streamlines home sale contracts, which again delivers on one of our key election commitments. The bill will also consolidate licensing categories and it provides for the deregulation of agents' commissions, bringing Queensland into line with other states. The Property Occupations Bill also removes the requirement for property developers and their employees to be licensed. In addition to the time and cost savings for business, this reform hopes to encourage market entrants and, in turn, increase competition in the development sector.

Through the proposed changes contained in the Motor Dealers and Chattel Auctioneers Bill I am very proud to say that the Attorney-General has been able to achieve a reduction in the number of prescribed government forms from 12 down to four. That equates to a reduction of 66 per cent. I congratulate the Attorney-General on that. Currently, auctioneers such as John Allery of Raine & Horne in Kingaroy may need two licences. Predominantly, a lot of such regional auctioneers need to have two licences because they are not only auctioning the property but also the livestock and other goods that sometimes go with rural properties. Under this bill, they will have to pay for the cost and administration of only one licence. Again, that is common sense: one licence, one amount of paperwork, one touchstone with government. I congratulate the Attorney-General. I am quite sure that all auctioneers will be very pleased with that change.

The Debt Collectors (Field Agents and Collection Agents) Bill will provide a system for regulating debt collectors and their employees and will protect consumers against undesirable practices associated with debt collection activities. It reduces red tape that burdens businesses and individuals carrying out debt collection. It also introduces a negative licensing regime for collection agents. This change is similar to changes that have happened in Victoria.

In closing, the reforms contained in these bills reflect our government's commitment to reduce red tape and regulation on not only businesses but also everyday Queensland consumers. In particular, these reforms also reduce the burdens on those agents and auctioneers, motor dealers and commercial agents about whom I have spoken. The process of the development of these bills was informed by an extensive consultation process. I note that there is substantial support for these bills from a wide range of stakeholders.

Ultimately, the time and cost savings delivered by these reforms not only for businesses but also for individual consumers will create a more competitive and efficient business in these vital sectors and industries and, ultimately, that will contribute to a stronger and more productive state economy. I support the bills before the House.