




Speech By  
**Hon. Jarrod Bleijie**

**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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Record of Proceedings, 5 March 2014

**PENALTIES AND SENTENCES (INDEXATION) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (4.53 pm), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate today. Can I start where we just stopped—with the member for Nicklin—while the insanity is fresh in any mind. The member for Nicklin talks about money that could be saved and that this is some sort of grab for money. It is as simple as this, Mr Deputy Speaker: the fees and charges of the government increased by the CPI over a year. The government had a whole-of-government approach to the CPI, saying it was going to be at 3.5 per cent. The government took the decision that rather than just fees and charges, these other items—including penalty rates—would be increased by 3.5 per cent or as determined by the Treasurer. There is no connection with what the member for Nicklin talks about with respect to funding inquiries. Would the member for Nicklin not have had us conduct the payroll inquiry into the issues of the government of the day not paying nurses and government—a government that he stood up for on every occasion and supported? The member for Nicklin was the one who did not support the payment of doctors and nurses in this state—

**Mr WELLINGTON:** I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw. The member for Nicklin stood up on every occasion in the last few years and—

**Mr WELLINGTON:** I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I said, 'The member for Nicklin stood up'.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Berry): Order! Member for Nicklin, I do not accept that.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The member for Nicklin, being a member of parliament, stood up in this place—I am being very cautious not to offend the member for Nicklin—and supported the Labor Party all the way, a Labor Party that did not pay nurses and doctors—

**Mr WELLINGTON:** I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable minister is being repetitive. He is not listening to the submissions in relation to—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Berry): Order! Member for Nicklin, he has withdrawn.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, could I first ask how many times is it necessary for a member to rise on a point of order and ask for withdrawal by a minister?

**Mr STEVENS:** I rise to a point of order. This is no opportunity for the member to get up in government business and just have a little question time.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Berry): Order! Member for Nicklin, I do not intend to answer that question. The Attorney-General has the floor.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The member for Nicklin raises issues in his contribution and then does not want to hear the answers. The whole point of the ministerial response is so that the minister can respond to the issues raised during the members' contributions. The member for Nicklin raised issues about inquiries. I raised the Health inquiry. Now, just because I am saying something the member for Nicklin does not want to hear does not mean he should be offended.

**Mr Wellington** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take interjection from the member for Nicklin. We did set up the Health payroll inquiry because we wanted to get to the bottom of how the Labor government that he supported so enthusiastically in this place could get into the situation of having a broken health system which could not pay nurses or doctors and has cost the Queensland taxpayers some \$800 million to try and fix. They are the issues we are raising. I ask the member for Nicklin: if he did not want to us conduct an inquiry—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Berry): Order! Attorney-General, you really need to refer that through the Speaker.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. If the member for Nicklin does not want to us to conduct inquiries, is he saying that we should not have held a Health payroll inquiry with Commissioner Chesterman to try to get to the bottom of it? Is the member for Nicklin saying we should not have conducted the child protection inquiry with Commissioner Carmody, setting out a road map for protecting children in the state? Is the member for Nicklin saying that we should not have held a racing inquiry to try to let in some light and disinfectant into the racing industry? I note my good colleague the Minister for Sport is here. I think the results of some of these inquiries have been very interesting; for example, Mr Bentley and Co, Mr Ludwig and the adverse findings against those individuals—

**Mr Pitt** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Berry): Order! Honourable members! The Attorney has the floor.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the Leader of the House, thank you for the protection from the Manager of Opposition Business over there. We have a situation here where the member for Nicklin wants to ask these questions but does not want to hear the answers because they are not quite what he wanted.

The point is that we had those commissions of inquiry because they were serious issues. One developed a road map for child protection in this state, because we want Queensland to be the safest place to raise a child. The way we could do that was to ensure that we had the child protection inquiry. I have to say that the inquiry made some fantastic recommendations which the government has of course endorsed. The racing inquiry now lets the Minister for Sport proceed on the basis of a great future for racing in Queensland and get rid of those in the industry who ran it as their personal empire, like Mr Bentley did. Of course, we then had the Health payroll inquiry. Since that inquiry the health minister and the department actually pay nurses. They actually pay them on time. They pay them the correct amount. If the member for Nicklin wants to go back in time and not set a road map for child protection, not have racing as a good industry in Queensland and not have doctors and nurses being paid, then it is the member for Nicklin's right to have that view and I think his constituents would find that particularly interesting.

**Mr Wellington:** Bring on the election!

**Mr BLEIJIE:** We will have a lot more to say about the member for Nicklin in the lead-up to the election in terms of the member for Nicklin's performance in this place and some of his policy positions in the last six months particularly.

The point is that this bill is about making sure there is a structure in place so that the penalty unit value increases over time, particularly at the moment with the 3.5 per cent with Treasury having the ability to do that. This is not some money grab from the government. The easiest way, of course,

for people not to have to worry about that 3.5 per cent is to not commit the crimes in the first place. If they do not get the tickets and they do not get the fines, then 3.5 per cent will not be applicable because the penalty units will not be applicable because there will be no penalty. So the best advice that anyone could give and the best advice that the member for Nicklin can give his constituents is that if they do not want to pay the 3.5 per cent—if they do not want to be worried about the 3.5 per cent—do not commit the crimes in the first place and then they do not have to worry about any of this. Just like those who complain about having to pay an offender levy, they would not have to complain if they did not commit any offences. I thank all government members for their contributions to the debate this afternoon and look forward to the consideration in detail.