




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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ELECTORAL AMENDMENT REGULATION (NO. 1): DISALLOWANCE OF STATUTORY INSTRUMENT

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (7.54 pm): I support this disallowance motion moved by the member for Nicklin. I congratulate the member for Nicklin for moving this motion, because that is what the member for Nicklin was elected to do. He has been a member of this place for 16 or 17 years. The people of the electorate of Nicklin have continually put their faith in the member for one particular reason. They have put him in here so that he can hold governments to account because his electorate has lost faith in the political process. That is why he has moved this motion. For the past 10 minutes we have heard a government member of parliament condemning the member for Nicklin for doing something that his electorate has voted him to do.

Not all the voters of Queensland want to vote for the major political parties. That is why we have Independents and minor parties. That is why the KAP has introduced six private member's bills. The member for Nicklin and the member for Gladstone have done the same thing year in, year out.

The government has continually introduced legislation to legislate the small parties—the small players, the small Independents—out of existence. That is why the member for Nicklin has moved this disallowance motion. It is not the member saying, 'How dare you do this?' He is doing what the people of his electorate have asked him to do.

In relation to section 4 of the regulation and policy development payments, the regulation is setting the particular amount to be used in the formula to calculate policy development payments. The explanatory notes to the Electoral Amendment Regulation (No. 1) state—

Amount of policy development payment to which eligible registered political party is entitled—Act, s 240

For section 240(1) of the Act, the amount prescribed for definition A is \$3m.

But the explanatory notes make no mention of that payment going to an Independent. So this regulation discriminates against Independent representatives of parliament, who were democratically elected. When people go to the polling booth to vote, the first thing they see on the ballot paper is the name of the person, not the political party. They do not go in there and vote for the political party first; it is the name of the candidate they see. So although people may tick the box that means that they are voting for an Independent, the government is discriminating against that person. If a candidate's name on the ballot paper has the name of a major political party next to it, that person is going to be very well looked after. That is why the member for Nicklin is moving this disallowance motion, because he wants fairness. All of us want fairness.

The funds for policy development have been provided in this regulation. That was never part of the reforms to the Electoral Bill. It was hidden. This is a way in which the government can feather its own nest. It gives it more funds. That is why the former member for Stafford left this place. He could see that it was about pork-barrelling and he could see that that was not what he was elected to do. We have to ask ourselves why. I think that the electors of Queensland are asking the same question.

The government will attempt to legislate any opposition out of existence. At the same time it keeps on talking about debt. All we hear is debt, debt, debt, but it is spending.

Mr HART: I rise to a point of order. This is a disallowance motion, Mr Deputy Speaker. This is just rambling incoherence.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order, members! I am listening closely to the speech. By and large, in my opinion, the member has been addressing the motion. I will continue to monitor that should relevance be an issue. The member for Dalrymple has the call.

Mr KNUTH: In section 240(1) of the act, the amount prescribed for the definition is \$3 million. This was not part of the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill. It talked about a slush fund, but it did not describe it in detail. The people of Queensland have the right to know this. There must be accountability. Those opposite keep preaching that we are in debt but there is a hell of a lot of money going into slush funds. The member can rise to a point of order, but this money is going into slush funds. We are seeing tens of millions of dollars going into Strong Choices campaigns and the Queensland Plan in these last six months. What people are asking for is not government to put in legislation to legislate out any opposition to ensure that the Independents are driven down, the only thing that they are asking for is good governance. That is not much to ask for.

The regulation explanatory notes state—

The Electoral Act provides for a policy development payment each financial year to be apportioned between eligible registered political parties (as defined in that Act) according to their relative electoral support. Section 240 provides that the amount to be made available for policy development payments must be prescribed by regulation.

Section 4 of the amendment regulation replaces section 8 of the Electoral Regulation to provide that the amount to be made available for policy development payments is \$3 million.

It is not consistent with the policy objectives of the authorising law because, as the member for Nicklin stated, all other states asked for it to be accounted for. This is not accounted for. We have good people like the member for Nicklin bringing to the attention of the people of Queensland how the government is sneaking through money for itself so it can look after its own interests and use it for political promotion. It is not about good government or good governance, but to save their political hide. That is why the member for Nicklin has put this forward. There is no acquittal process and no accountability. It is about blowing that money by whatever means necessary. It could go to anything: billboards, campaigns or political ads. It is about saving their political hide.

Under 'Consultation' it states—

Comprehensive community consultation was undertaken on the amendment act.

This is laughable. This is comical. My goodness! The member for Hinchinbrook realises it is a bit of a mockery himself. The Premier apologised for not being accountable. He was going to try to be accountable and upfront. He acknowledged that the way he has been in the last two years was inappropriate. This was done before the Premier apologised. I have to say that, yes, fair enough, it was comical, but this is the way the LNP was before the apology. I do not know how long it is going to last. I commend the member for Nicklin. I hope that the LNP acknowledges the error of its ways and supports the member for Nicklin in disallowing this unjust regulation. Five minutes before Christmas break up the government introduced legislation to take away \$1 million of staff support funding from the KAP. This is an opportunity for the government to redeem itself and show that it acknowledges the error of its ways.