




Speech By  
**Trevor Watts**

**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH**

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### **FAIR TRADING INSPECTORS BILL**

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (5.17 pm): I rise to support the minister's bill. This is a bill which is well and truly overdue. Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for chairing the committee and I certainly thank the committee for all the work that has been done. There was some mention as to why this might have taken two years to come forward. We have been getting on with the job. I think that our committee now has passed 56 reports up to this House, so we have been busy cutting red tape and getting decent legislation into this place.

But before I go too far into that, let us just look at what the Fair Trading Inspectors Bill 2013 is all about. The main objectives of the bill are: to address some inconsistencies; harmonise and consolidate the provisions contained in the 14 acts about fair trading and how the inspectors can use those acts; to improve the enforcement and compliance activities relating to fair trading legislation; to provide a flexible legislative framework which enables additional acts dealing with fair trading to be added to the scope of the bill in the future; and to repeal the inspectorate provisions contained in particular acts about fair trading and make consequential amendments.

This bill amends 14 acts—the Agents and Financial Administration Act 2013, the Debt Collectors (Field Agents and Collection Agents) Act 2013, the Funeral Benefit Business Act 1982, the Introduction Agents Act 2001, the Land Sales Act 1984, the Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act 2003, the Motor Dealers and Chattel Auctioneers Act 2013, the Property Occupations Act 2013, the Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2002, the Retirement Villages Act 1999, the Second-hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 2003, the Security Providers Act 1993, the Tourism Services Act 2003 and the Travel Agents Act 1988. We have had over 10 years of Labor having reviews and looking into the issue and expressing some patience and putting the bill down to come forward and then letting it lapse. It took 10 or maybe even 12 years to get to that point yet we get criticised for not only this being the 55th report from the committee but for bringing this bill forward and cutting red tape. Can members imagine how hard it has been for a poor Fair Trading inspector to do their job under Labor's crazy regime? Talk about patience! How much patience would an inspector have to have had to deal with different amounts, different punishments, different capabilities and different articles in all of these different acts?

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr WATTS:** How long has it taken? The first review was done in 2002 and then 2007 and then those opposite had to think about it. I think they may well have—

**Mr Bleijie:** They were being patient with it.

**Mr WATTS:** There definitely was some patience. I think there may have been some chamomile tea being drunk while they were being patient. Finally in 2011 their bill was introduced, and what happened? They ran out of time, and that is so typical Labor—chaotic administration under 14 acts while poor inspectors are trying to do their job drowning in red tape and running around with

paperwork everywhere. Labor had a review followed by a review followed by lapsed legislation. That is what Labor brings to this place—review after review, lapsed legislation, plenty of patience.

**Ms Trad:** Are you going to talk about the bill?

**Mr WATTS:** I am talking about the bill. It is a shame that I am here talking about the bill when Labor could have been talking about it 10 years before I got here if it had got on with it, but it did not get on with it, did it?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Berry): Thank you, member for Toowoomba North. Please continue.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you; I shall. I need to get it done so I can go and have a cup of tea before I go home. Ultimately, the bill itself is a pretty simple piece of legislation. It cuts down red tape, it makes Fair Trading inspectors' jobs simpler, it means that we have less people shuffling less paper trying to ensure that people who are breaching legislation are caught and charged and the rest of us can get on with our lives without strangling our officers and our inspectors in red tape. I certainly thank the minister for bringing the bill forward. I hope that there are not more of these reviews and other pieces of legislation that might have taken 10 years to come to this place while we were expressing some patience when meanwhile we are watching the debt accumulate and get out of control—that is, up to \$80 billion of Labor's debt. How many hours have passed between 2002's first review and now, all the while our interest bill is ticking away at \$450,000—thanks very much—for Labor's maladministration? This is just another example of why we are here to try to cut this red tape and get on with governing the state, and we will be doing that. I commend the minister for bringing this bill forward.