




Speech By  
**Hon. Cameron Dick**

**MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE**

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Record of Proceedings, 7 May 2015

**ELECTORAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (7.33 pm): Can I say how pleased I am to speak this evening, as a member of the Queensland Labor government, in support of the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I speak tonight to give a voice to the people of Woodridge. Tonight the voice of Woodridge is with me. Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg your indulgence to point out that I am so honoured to have a number of good people of the Woodridge electorate here tonight.

**Government members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr DICK:** I thank my colleagues for their support of the great people of Woodridge who supported me in the election of 2015 and whose great diligence and hard work led to my election and one of the most significant swings that brought Labor back to power in Queensland. I will say a little bit more about the people of Woodridge in the address-in-reply debate when the parliament convenes next. It is an enormous honour for some of the hardworking citizens of the electorate of Woodridge—the best electorate in Queensland—to be here tonight. I know that causes some consternation for some of my colleagues.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Grace): Order! Now you will start to speak to the bill.

**Mr DICK:** Thank you. I am speaking tonight because of what I saw happen in the 2015 election. I am speaking on this bill tonight because of what the people of Woodridge told me in particular about the so-called ‘reforms’—and I use that term advisedly—implemented by the previous Newman LNP government in relation to imposing voter ID restrictions on Queenslanders who sought to freely exercise their vote. I give a voice to the people of Woodridge who were subjected to that law to restrict people’s access to a free vote in Queensland along with every other citizen of this state. I will say more about that.

We know the provisions of this bill. I support each and every one of them absolutely and completely. The provisions include: lowering the electoral gift disclosure threshold from \$12,400 to \$1,000 and making it retrospective; and reducing the threshold for the prohibition on anonymous donations to political parties from \$12,800 to \$1,000. The people of Woodridge know that under the previous law in Queensland—the law that still applies—someone could come into an electorate office with \$10,000 in cash in a brown paper bag and leave it in the electorate office and no-one would ever know about it. No-one would ever know who left that bag there. We know that there were examples of that in the Bjelke-Petersen government.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** I will not take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. If you are to interject, member for Lockyer, you know the rules of this place. You must do it from your seat. What an example that is. The Liberal National Party—

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Members, if you want to interject please be reminded that you have to do it from your seat. I call the minister.

**Mr DICK:** What a small microcosm of the mindset of the Liberal National Party who believe they represent the establishment, who think they can do whatever they want whenever they want to people—which they did in the last three years. They wander around the parliament yelling out wherever they want. They lecture other people. In the 2015 election what the people of Queensland did was say, 'We saw Campbell Newman for who he was.' He was the man that wanted to enshrine in law the brown paper bag as a way forward in our state and Labor stands opposed to that.

This bill will also: reinstate the six-monthly reporting by political parties and associated entities; facilitate real-time disclosure of political donations; amend the Crime and Corruption Act and Judges (Pensions and Long Leave) Act to provide for a superannuation pension similar to that of a Supreme Court judge for the chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission. I do not have long enough tonight to talk about the perversion of our crime and misconduct and our crime and corruption system by the Liberal National Party over the last three years. That will be a debate for another day.

The bill will, most importantly: remove voter proof-of-identity requirements for state and local government elections. There has been a lot of criticism of this process. What this government is doing is delivering on our promise. We are delivering on an election commitment that was clearly enunciated in that campaign and, in fact, for a considerable period before to deliver a modern, transparent and open government in Queensland.

Let us look at the international experience. What does the international experience say about voter ID laws? To see that we only have to look to the United States where the federal Department of Justice had to take on the state of Texas because of their voter identification laws. An article published in the *Guardian* by Ana Marie Cox stated—

The DOJ filing in Texas lays it all out pretty clearly, putting the voter ID law in context of a concerted legislative strategy to deny representation to the state's growing Hispanic population, including Republicans advancing more and more aggressive voter ID bills over the years.

The article continues—

... they will need—

this is the Republicans in Texas—

to defend the outrageous details of the law—

that is, the Texas ID voter law—

such as how a concealed carry permit is a permissible form of voter ID but a federally-issued Medicare card carried by an elderly woman is not.

So in Texas we now have a situation where if you have a licence to carry a concealed weapon that is better proof of identification than a federally issued Medicare card in the United States.

What happens is they bring the law in and then they continue to expand the law to disenfranchise people. That is the fundamental point about voter ID laws in Australia. They disenfranchise people.

What does the Australian experience say? You only have to go to a research paper issued on 4 August 2014 by the Parliamentary Library for the Australian House of Representatives which was an analysis of the 2010 election. That report states—

... of the 14,086,869 electors eligible to vote, 1,454 electors across Australia (or 0.01 per cent) admitted to voting more than once, and of those, over 80 per cent were either aged persons, new electors confused about the voting process, or those with language difficulties.

There is no evidence that multiple voting has ever had any effect on an election in Australia. It is generally and overwhelmingly older people and people from non-English-speaking backgrounds—like the electorate of Woodridge, where 50 per cent of people have English as the second language in the home—who are confused about our voting system that leads to multiple voting. The report goes on—

The evidence from New South Wales about socio-economic factors associated with multiple voting suggests that 'tighter voting identification measures may simply miss the point':

If multiple voting is strongly associated with problems comprehending English, then perhaps the approach taken to dealing with multiple voting should focus on education campaigns in community languages, rather than voter identification measures. Such education programs may work with varying degrees of success but, in contrast to tighter voter identification measures, they will not have the potential to make it harder for honest citizens to access the ballot.

That is exactly what the Liberal National Party wanted to do. We know voter ID laws work against people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. They work against Indigenous people. They work against people who do not have a proper understanding of English. They work against the

people of Woodridge. In a free and democratic society, the most important thing for every citizen is to have a free and unimpeded right to cast their vote in an election. That is the most fundamental tenet of our democracy.

Of course that legislation was introduced by an attorney-general, the member for Kawana, who is universally decried as having no integrity—completely discredited in the legal community where I served for three years. And they put the laws of voting into his hands! This law that the LNP proposed was a solution in search of a problem. It was a naked attempt to undermine the universality of the franchise in this state and Labor has always fought to expand the franchise, to expand the voice of the people and to ensure everyone has a free say in our society. I commend the Attorney-General on this very important bill. What a refreshing change she is as an outstanding first law officer of this state. I commend this bill to all members of the parliament.