




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (RESTORING FAIRNESS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (7.30 pm): I rise to address the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill but, in order to do so, I must provide some contextual background with some specific references to matters reported on but, in my opinion and that of many others, inadequately analysed and assessed in the public domain over the past 18 months. In 2013, the Industrial Relations (Fair Work Act Harmonisation No. 2) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill was passed by the 54th Queensland Parliament. This 2013 legislation reformed Queensland's industrial relations legislative framework and associated systems and structure for the better by amending the Industrial Relations Act 1999, the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990 and the Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990.

The Industrial Relations (Fair Work Act Harmonisation No. 2) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013 delivered a positive legislative platform to modernise and rationalise the then existing archaic awards. At that time there were 83 existing state and local government awards. The Queensland Employment Standards, similar to the National Employment Standards, were implemented, ensuring that minimum standards relating to public sector wages were upheld and that various leave provisions as well as notice of termination and redundancy pay were guaranteed. The Queensland Employment Standards are based on the existing Industrial Relations Act minimum conditions as well as the previously mentioned National Employment Standards as set under the Commonwealth's Fair Work Act 2009.

The Industrial Relations (Fair Work Act Harmonisation No. 2) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 also provided for statutory industrial individual employment contracts for high-income public sector employees, such as those paid more than \$129,300—certainly, an appropriate reform for industrial relations in the modern era given that this is also the same high-income threshold that is used in the Commonwealth's Fair Work Act to determine eligibility for individual contracts. The changes also introduced a requirement for industrial organisations—that is unions—to be transparent with regard to spending for political purposes, including election campaigns. Other significant improvements included the introduction of specific time frames in which conciliation and arbitration by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission could occur as well as ensuring that, during relevant conciliation and arbitration periods, industrial action taken by negotiating parties could not be classified as protected industrial action. Also, removing encouragement provisions from certified agreements and awards, such as those encouragement provisions which, in essence, coerce or force a person to join or maintain membership of an industrial association, including unions, were prudent, wise and visionary for achieving a vibrant, harmonious, modern and productive public sector workforce accountable to the relevant state government of the day and, more importantly, the taxpayers of Queensland. In essence, it was transformational legislation that has delivered for Queensland.

I congratulate the former member for Stafford, Dr Chris Davis, for supporting the 2013 legislation. That is right: Dr Chris Davis voted for the LNP's legislation, as he knew and also agreed that it was in the best interests of Queenslanders, including patients. However, a short few months later he seemed to be opposed. He was opposed possibly for his own conflicted reasons, or perhaps he had not read the legislation, or perhaps he did not understand it. When you stand for everything, you stand for nothing. Perhaps Dr Chris Davis and the former member for Gaven, Dr Alex Douglas, are just in a perpetual state of confusion. Are they LNP? Are they Independents? Are they Palmer United? Are they Labor? Or perhaps they hope to become part of Team Lazarus. Perhaps both are suffering from African trypanosomiasis, otherwise known as sleeping sickness, or, in the case of Dr Douglas, his own self-inflicted voodoo spell. Whilst I cannot agree with the Premier's proposed industrial legislation, I congratulate the member for Inala on her party's wise decision to delay Dr Davis's membership of the ALP for at least 12 months, if ever.

I digress. The Palaszczuk government's Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 seeks to destroy the much improved, flexible and modernised industrial relations system of the past 18 months. If passed, the Palaszczuk government's legislation will lead to reduced productivity, wastage and poorer efficiency in the public sector, including longer waiting times for patients in public hospitals, jeopardised clinical outcomes and a lack of value for money for taxpayers. And what about the personal details of public servants being given to unions bosses without their consent? Absolutely shameful!

Removing the requirement that the Industrial Relations Commission must consider the relevant employer's financial position and the state's financial position and fiscal strategy as part of public interest in wage arbitration matters should be cause for great alarm right across Queensland. Removing the potential right of an employer or employer representative to give a direction to a union officer if it is deemed reasonably necessary by the employer to discharge his or her duty under the Workplace Health and Safety Act is also inappropriate, as is removing the requirement for 24 hours notice of entry to be given by union representatives. What about the removal of the ability to enter into high-income guarantee contracts with individual employees? It will be interesting to see what the Palaszczuk government attempts to implement, as opposed to what the final outcome is, particularly with respect to Queensland Health's visiting medical officers, let alone senior medical officers.

Before a certain disgraceful cyber troll—in fact, a mediocre, unprofessional and erratic Brisbane based immunologist—makes an appearance on social media, can I thank his Facebook friends for keeping me up to date with his shameful online antics that may even draw the attention of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency once the federal government introduces cyberbullying laws later this year. His view of the world is very limited indeed. And what about the member for Bundamba's previous slur on the reputation of public sector visiting medical officers by referring to them as 'Tahitian doctors ripping off the system' when it is the member for Bundamba who is the Louis Vuitton fake? I acknowledge and pay respect to some truly great AMA Queensland presidents who have also served as visiting medical officers, including Dr Ross Cartmill, Dr Bill Glasson, Dr Russell Stitz and Dr David Molloy.

Those who support the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 are motivated purely by self-interest for their own conflicted reasons. As a president of a professional association such as the Australian Medical Association, as opposed to being a left-wing union boss like Dr Tony Sara of the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation, you have a mutual obligation to advocate not only for your members but also for what is in the interests of patients and the public—in other words, striking a balance when it comes to negotiated outcomes—but, if there is ever truly a conflict of interest, then choosing and prioritising the interests of the public and patients first and foremost. I will always advocate for and defend the interests of the public. Never again, having been democratically elected, will I be denied my right of freedom of speech by rogue, unethical and unconstitutional governance processes bastardised by a few individuals, their unions and associated union sympathisers and apologists primarily in the Together union and the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation.

Some senior doctor unionists also sought to profit—I say again 'profit'—by a prolonged Queensland public hospital doctor dispute. The Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, if passed, will cause harm to Queensland. This bill is prima facie evidence of the deal struck between the Labor Party and the medical unions prior to the last election.

The Local Government Association of Queensland has warned that Labor's proposed industrial relations changes will cost 1,500 jobs across Queensland in the next 18 months. The member for Mount Isa and the member for Dalrymple recently voted in favour of a motion in this parliament in

support of waiting list integrity in Queensland. In order to ensure their constituents obtain treatment within clinically recommended time frames they must reject the Palaszczuk government's industrial legislation. I cannot support the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, nor should any other members do so. The Queensland parliament should vote to reject this legislation given that it is poor public policy and not in the interests of Queenslanders.