




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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ADJOURNMENT

Local Government, Jobs

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumbidgee—ALP) (5.22 pm): Last week I was honoured to be a guest of the Services Union at their annual conference in Brisbane. These local government employees told me about their ongoing struggle to achieve fairness in local government workplaces and encouraged me to keep talking about their struggle. So I will give the House an update on restoring fairness in council workplaces in Queensland.

The LGAQ took issue with me about what I said on 4 June during debate on the restoring fairness bill. I have done some more research on the matter and I can give the House some more information on Northern Australia Services. I said, 'This is what I have been informed. Reportedly the other 50 per cent is owned by Partnerships Australia, which is 50 per cent owned by the LGAQ.' The LGAQ have clarified that. Fifty per cent of NAS is not owned by Mackay Enterprises. It is owned by two joint venture parties—Prevwood and Partnerships Australia. Prevwood have 67 per cent of that 50 per cent, and Partnerships Australia have 33 per cent. Prevwood is a private company owned by the LGAQ, and Partnerships Australia is owned by Aegis Services Australia. Prevwood and Partnerships Australia also own a company called Queensland Partnership Group (LG Shared Services) Pty Ltd (Propel Manager) in the same ratio of 67 per cent to 33 per cent.

I thank them for that information. It shows the ownership structure is even more complicated than we thought. We now know that the LGAQ have no interest in Partnerships Australia. They are the co-owners of other ventures with Partnerships Australia—NSA and Queensland Partnership Group—through their own private company Prevwood.

We now know that the NSA was set up during recent enterprise bargaining negotiations, reportedly so. It was registered on 17 December 2014, and the Services Union informed me that the enterprise bargaining negotiation started in October 2014. I said, 'Reportedly, 650 workers from council would go across to this new company out of a workforce of 1,400.' The LGAQ still have not given me clarity on this. They told me that 155 Mackay council staff will be involved in the NAS project but they will remain council employees. But they also told me that there are no immediate plans for NAS to employ council staff. My question is: if the council wants the partnership with NAS to cap operating costs through driving efficiencies and deliver improved services to the community, who will be delivering these services to the community if not council employees?

It is clear why the local government employees I met at the Services Union conference were still concerned. I still have concerns with local governments looking to have their work done by private corporations, especially those with complicated ownership structures. I still have concerns about the industrial relations legacy left by Campbell Newman and how councils treat their staff and their unions. We want to keep restoring fairness in workplaces throughout Queensland, and I ask the LGAQ and councils to join with us to do so.