



Speech By  
**Hon. Curtis Pitt**


**MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 March 2015

## **PAYROLL TAX REBATE, REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

### **Introduction**

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (11.55 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013, the Duties Act 2001, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000, the Payroll Tax Act 1971, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002, the Taxation Administration Act 2001 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Finance and Administration Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 [\[221\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes [\[222\]](#).

This bill seeks to implement the government's 2015 election commitments to provide a payroll tax rebate for apprentice and trainee wages and to restore high standards in Queensland's plumbing industry. The bill will also amend Queensland's revenue legislation and other acts administered through the Treasury department to ensure their currency and proper operation.

This government recognises that apprenticeships and traineeships provide a great employment pathway, particularly for young Queenslanders. This in turn contributes to the development of a highly skilled workforce to permit delivery of projects to ensure Queensland's economic growth into the future.

As an incentive to employers to hire apprentices and trainees, the government's election commitments included the introduction of a 25 per cent payroll tax rebate on the wages of apprentices and trainees, funded over three years, in addition to the existing exemption for apprentice and trainee wages. This commitment is delivered through extending the application of provisions introduced by a former Labor government, providing an apprentice and trainee wages rebate for the 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12 financial years. As amended, the provisions will now also apply for the 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 financial years. This will capitalise on existing systems and administrative frameworks in place for the earlier rebate, minimising implementation costs and utilising a model familiar to Queensland employers.

This bill also makes amendments to the Duties Act 2001 and the Taxation Administration Act 2001 to support the introduction of electronic conveyancing in Queensland. Electronic conveyancing will provide a process for settling qualifying land transactions between parties and their financiers through a shared electronic workspace as an alternative to the traditional face-to-face settlement process. This Council of Australian Governments initiative will involve the electronic creation of transfer forms, their digital signing, and progression through financial settlement, transfer duty endorsement and lodgement with the Registrar of Titles via an electronic work space.

In addition to these measures, the bill enacts a number of taxpayer beneficial amendments. These include concessional treatment for agreements for the transfer of exploration authorities under certain resource sector farm-in agreements which will assist in the exploration and development of exploration authorities in Queensland and recognises the risks to return on investment for exploration activity. The farm-in agreements that are eligible for the concession will be defined; however, the criteria are defined so that relief will be available for the farm-in arrangements most commonly used in the sector.

Other amendments to the Taxation Administration Act 2001 will ensure fairer treatment for taxpayers whose objection to a tax assessment is upheld by the commissioner. A refund resulting from any reassessment that is issued as a result of such a decision will attract interest payable by the commissioner to the taxpayer. These amendments recognise that, where a taxpayer's objection is successful, it is fair that they should be paid interest on the refund amount. Other amendments to state revenue laws under the bill are beneficial to taxpayers or grant applicants or clarify the operation of or correct an anomaly in the legislation. A final amendment is necessary to protect revenue.

Amendments to the Financial Accountability Act 2009 will reflect modern auditing and financial management practices and streamline certain procedural matters such as increasing the powers delegated by the Treasurer to appropriate officers in Queensland Treasury and Queensland Treasury Corporation and addressing issues relating to machinery-of-government changes. Appropriate controls and governance arrangements will continue to exist with the proposed changes. The bill will delay for a further 12 months certain not commenced amendments in the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013 which would have unduly added a regulatory burden to the assessment of certain licensed occupations covered by the Electrical Safety Act 2002, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. If commenced, these provisions will cause significant delays in processing licence applications and renewals. There are concerns that any benefits arising from their implementation will be outweighed by the costs to workers in potentially restricting Queenslanders' ability to commence or continue to earn a living in their licensed occupation. This delay will allow for the government's review of these laws to occur, including whether these provisions are required.

The bill also amends the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to allow the cancellation of a transitional environmental program or a temporary emissions licence where the operator and the administering authority have agreed on other measures to achieve compliance with the Environmental Protection Act 1994 or the program or licence is no longer required. These are sensible amendments which, amongst other things, will provide certainty for the continued operation of the copper smelter at Mount Isa past 2016. Closure of the smelter would have caused significant job losses in both Mount Isa and Townsville.

I now turn to the amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008. This government made a commitment at the recent election to restore high standards in Queensland's plumbing industry. The amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 will realise this election commitment by requiring the installation of water meters to be performed by a licensed plumber. The Plumbing and Drainage and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015 also contains a transitional provision that will allow a person who is currently authorised by a water service provider to install a relevant water meter to continue to perform this work for a period of two years. After the transitional period expires, only a licensed plumber will be able to perform this work. This transitional period is important as it will allow the water sector time to adjust to the new legislative arrangements. I commend the bill to the House.

### **First Reading**

**Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (12.02 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### **Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Finance and Administration Committee.

## **Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date**

**Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (12.03 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Finance and Administration Committee report to the House on the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 22 May 2015.