




Speech By
Hon. Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Record of Proceedings, 7 May 2015

**INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (RESTORING FAIRNESS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

Motion: 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) (11.55 am), in reply: I have heard the range of comments and none of them is surprising. I expected that there would be some concern from those opposite in terms of the time frame, and I acknowledged that there would be some concerns. What I do find is a whole lot of crocodile tears being cried by those opposite today. When we talk about time frames for the introduction and passing of bills in this House, let's cast their mind back to what happened over the last three years. I am very happy at the end of this three-year term to compare Labor's record, the Palaszczuk government's record, to what happened under Campbell Newman's government.

The reason this is so urgent is quite simply the decisions of the former government: the sacking of 14,000 workers, the arbitrary stroke-of-a-pen arrangements they put in place for industrial relations and their removing very important conditions that should have been considered to be allowable matters on any day of the week—hard-fought and won conditions, as we have heard from the Leader of the House. This has been our largest single platform, besides our opposition to the sale of public assets that they spent \$70 million on, for a long time. This is about ensuring that we put in an act our election commitments.

When we talk about time frames, let everyone remember what happened. I will step this out for them so they can see the hypocrisy. What we saw last term was on the Monday of a certain sitting week there was a big discussion about casino licences—the casino licence led recovery for Queensland—and that was thrown right in on day one. That was exhibit A. That was the first distraction. On the second day they brought into this House laws that we are all very aware of—the VLAD legislation. They brought that in on the Tuesday. Then what happened? Did we have a month to look at this serious legislation? Did we have three weeks? Did we have one week? No. We had hours—hours to get across 180 pages of legislation. That is how much time we had.

Frankly, for them to sit across there and suggest that they have any moral high ground when it comes to timing of election commitments being brought into the House or any moral high ground when it comes to the timing of passing legislation is absolutely absurd. I respect the fact that we will need to work hard in terms of ensuring that consultation can happen in this period, and I expect there will be some concerns raised. I note that the shadow minister has already referred to the Bar Association and the Law Society. I understand that they have made those concerns known to the government already. I can say that that is not what they should expect from this government, nor should they expect these sorts of time frames ongoing.

I make no apology for the fact that this is important to allow certainty of our industrial relations framework in this state, to ensure that bargaining can happen right across the public sector so that local governments are able to go into the second half of this year—knowing that they are preparing budgets and knowing all of the other elements they are dealing with—with certainty in terms of the industrial relations system, particularly as it relates to award modernisation in Queensland. They are literally crying crocodile tears over there about this. This is less to do with anyone else. They are just upset that they are still in denial about losing an election. That is the worst part about this, because this is all about their opposition to this bill. They know very clearly the time frames—

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. You just ruled in relation to talking about the bill itself. This is about the timing of the bill.

Mr PITT: I was talking about time frames when you got up on your feet.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! I call the Treasurer.

Mr PITT: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. My old sparring partner and I—when he was Leader of the House and I was Manager of Opposition Business—go way back. I know that he is feeling sentimental, and it is great to have a bit of tit for tat with him today.

I come back to the point that those opposite rushed through so many pieces of legislation. I will stand on the record of this Palaszczuk government at the end of this term and do a quick compare and contrast. They are very quick to judge. They used a range of excuses to say that things were urgent and provided no opportunity for our side of the House to consider motions.

As for the deputy chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, I understand, having been a former member of that committee, that that committee can have a significant workload. But I ask: where was the member for Coomera when the legal affairs committee was getting smashed the day that the VLAD laws were put into this House and passed on the same day with no genuine reason for urgency? We are allowing as much time as we can to ensure the bill is passed before the end of this financial year to ensure that we can go into the next financial year with some certainty around industrial relations matters.

I have met with the Local Government Association of Queensland on numerous occasions, and I will continue to meet with the Local Government Association of Queensland and individual councils as required, as will the Deputy Premier and Minister for Local Government, because we want to restore fairness. That is exactly what this legislation is about. We will work through this process to make it work the best that it can for everyone concerned. We want to put certainty into an area that had the guts ripped out of it only three years ago.