




Speech By  
**Deb Frecklington**

**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (4.57 pm): I rise to speak on the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I rise to speak on only a few aspects of the bill. There are amendments in the bill before the House that the new government has introduced that alter work done by the previous government. A couple of aspects of the bill concern me greatly, even more so now that I have sat in the House and listened to the sheer diatribe of the members opposite.

The two aspects of the bill that I am going to briefly touch on are the 97 per cent of businesses across Queensland that are ignored by the bill and the amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act which ignore Queensland families living in rural areas. Simply because a member's electoral boundary might be 50 minutes from this House does not mean that the boundary stops there. Unfortunately, not all of our regional seats take only 15 minutes to get across.

In relation to small business, this bill pretends to stimulate an uptake in apprentices and trainees being hired by small businesses by offering a rebate in payroll tax. That is great but, unfortunately, we need to look at the clauses in the bill and not just be brainwashed by what your notes say. This rebate is only accessible to the businesses who have an annual wages bill of over \$1.1 million. That represents only three per cent of businesses in this state. What about all of the other small businesses, particularly those in my electorate? I do not think if I included all of the businesses in my electorate there would be one in that three per cent category. What about those businesses who would really like to hire an apprentice or who would really like to hire a trainee but simply cannot afford to because they fall outside of the steep parameters set by those opposite, by the Labor government?

Our former government listened to the business community. We introduced policies like the \$91 million Jobs of Tomorrow package. While the minister is over there, I should remind him that the electorate of Nanango goes all the way over to past Highfields, where he was the other day apparently opening the 'first ever' energy museum in Queensland. I hate to tell him that the Tarong Energy centre in Nanango has been there for many years. As the minister for that illustrious area of Tarong, he should know not to tell the statewide media that he is opening the first ever energy centre when my electorate actually already has two. I think the minister should look into those regional seats that are outside of the CBD of Brisbane and he might learn a little bit more about it, but I do divert.

Like I said, we introduced policies like the \$91 million Jobs of Tomorrow package, which would have helped out over 26,000 young Queenslanders get into work. Part of this package was the hugely successful and popular apprenticeship pledge, which offered employers up to \$6,000 for each additional apprentice taken on. It was so popular that the initial 6,000 placements were doubled by the LNP government to 12,000, and the fully funded initiative was open to all businesses no matter how big or how small.

In my Nanango electorate, some 20 small businesses took up that apprenticeship pledge. The Grand Old Crow Hotel in Crows Nest in the southern part of my electorate took on the apprenticeship pledge to help them employ a new apprentice chef. All About Refrigeration and Airconditioning in Kingaroy took on a new apprentice in refrigeration. MJ Cannon Transport in Crows Nest again took on a metal fabricator. Reno Worx in Kingaroy took on a cabinet-maker. They would not have been able to do it without that \$6,000 help. Tiler Alexander Bollen at Meringandan West took on a wall and floor tiling apprentice. I know many more small businesses who had also hoped to take up the pledge, but it seems those opposite have simply canned it.

In contrast, under this bill a business with a payroll tax liability of \$10,000 will stand to save less than \$600 under this new scheme. Compare that to the \$6,000 apprenticeship pledge incentive and you can see the stark contrast. The LNP understands business. We listen to business and we work with them—the mums and dads, the families and the partnerships running great small businesses right across the state, not just right here in the CBD of Brisbane.

At the federal level, I am pleased that the Abbott government is easing the tax burden on small business. Just last week I had Lawrence Springborg attend a small business forum in my electorate all because they wanted to hear about how the federal budget was going to benefit their business, because it is a sad fact that they are getting no joy and absolutely no love out of the Labor government at all. They are only making it tougher for them.

I also wanted to quickly touch on the amendments to the bill in relation to the Plumbing and Drainage Act. The LNP government introduced a bill into the House which removed an ambiguity between the acts relating to who is permitted to install water meters. The act empowered an authorised person to read, maintain and replace a water meter than a licensed plumber. The amendments being debated today will reverse this decision, meaning—and we are not talking about plumbing in a house—that the installation of a water meter is plumbing work that can be performed only by a licensed plumber.

The negative impacts on the families in my electorate of this change are just incredible. It ignores the potential increase in plumbing costs to people who live in areas that do not have plumbers. I note that the member for Broadwater quite clearly listed all of the regional areas that do not have licensed plumbers residing in their areas.

Since the legislation from the LNP government was passed, there have been no specific examples of the water meter installations being done in such a way that risked any form of health and safety. It seems that Labor are either introducing change for change's sake, or perhaps they are making good on their promise to their union mates. Whatever the reason, it is not in the interests of common sense and it is certainly not in the interests of the wider community. I refer to the submission made by qldwater, which states—

The policy objective clearly supports the re-establishment of a protected market for plumbers for work which is more appropriately managed by water service providers. It has been developed under the false premise of improvement to public safety. By adopting this position, the Queensland Government is ignoring industry best practice in Australia and internationally.

The LGAQ stated—

At no time in this debate has it ever been established that the current arrangements has resulted in adverse outcomes impacting on public safety, water quality or water supply security. Indeed, the examples of cross-connections and incidents involving the installation of water meters put forward previously were during a time when only licensed plumbers were permitted to do the work. In the current environment, both authorised persons and licensed plumbers are expected to have the same high standards of work, with the former receiving specific training and more frequent experience in regard to installing meters.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this bill on behalf of my constituents, and I will continue to highlight the issues which affect regional communities because, unfortunately, there is much learning to be done by the members sitting across from me in this House.