




Speech By  
**Glenn Butcher**

**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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Record of Proceedings, 20 May 2015

**PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (9.58 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015, introduced by the Premier. In 2011 the government transferred decision-making responsibilities regarding the management of the Parliamentary Service from the position of the Speaker to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly and, in some cases, to the Clerk of the Parliament.

During the election campaign the Australian Labor Party committed to returning integrity and accountability to the Queensland parliament. To this end, it included a commitment that the autonomy of the Speaker in the parliament would be restored. The bill proposes to amend the Parliamentary Service Act 1988 to return responsibility for the management of the Parliamentary Service from the CLA to the Speaker. However, the position of Clerk will remain as the employing authority for the Legislative Assembly of Parliamentary Service officers and employees, as has been the case since 2011.

As the size of the CLA will increase from seven to eight MPs under this bill, the bill also proposes to increase the quorum of CLA meetings from four to five MPs. This is in line with the quorum for the parliament's portfolio committees when they comprise eight MPs and ensures true and fair representation at all times.

To further enhance the importance and autonomy of the position of Speaker within the parliament, the bill proposes to amend the act to give the Speaker a deliberative vote on all questions at CLA meetings across all of its areas of responsibility together with a casting vote should a vote on any question be tied.

This bill also addresses the inequity in pay increases for members of this chamber and Queensland's public servant workforce. In economic times such as that which we are presently experiencing, politicians must lead by example. After only three months since the election of the 55th Parliament of Queensland, it would be inappropriate and totally unacceptable for its members to accept any form of a pay rise. Further, not only should members' pay not increase in the immediate future; next time a pay increase is even considered it should be fairly considered and be in line with that of the public servants of Queensland.

Unlike the former government, this government believes that those working at the coalface supporting the work of members of parliament deserve financial respect and recognition. While the offer to public sector employees was a 2.2 per cent salary increase, the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal has granted a 2.58 per cent salary increase to members of the Legislative Assembly from 6 April 2015. While the recommended increase for members of parliament is not significantly more, it simply should not be higher at all. This bill will retrospectively overturn the determination of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal, which grants a 2.58 per cent salary increase to members of the Legislative Assembly from 6 April and will allow the Clerk of the Parliament to recover the salary overpayments to MPs between that date and the passing of this bill.

If a 2.2 per cent pay rise is considered good enough by those opposite for our hardworking public servants, then surely it should suffice for those of us sitting here in this chamber.

Public servants have for too long been the forgotten mortar in the bricks of Queensland. It is not only those public servants we encounter in our everyday life like teachers, teacher aides, nurses, policemen, fireies and ambos but also the thousands of employees in many Queensland government departments. It also includes those ably assisting in this very chamber tonight. Every public servant makes a huge contribution to keeping our state powering on each and every day. This Labor government recognises that they are very deserving of equal monetary consideration. To that end, this bill will place a limit on the tribunal so that it cannot determine percentage salary increases to MPs greater than percentage salary increases received by our public servants. I strongly encourage all members to support this bill tonight.