




Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (4.38 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, and a very appropriately named bill it is. Before the 2012 election the Liberal National Party had one message for the public servants of Queensland: you have nothing to fear from an LNP government. Apparently public servants had nothing to fear when the former LNP government used its massive majority to remove a range of employment conditions that helped ensure a politically impartial Public Service. Apparently public servants had nothing to fear when the former LNP government axed employment security provisions and cut protections against the contracting out of government services, the slashing of organisational change provisions and the removal of termination, change and redundancy provisions.

According to the LNP before the 2012 election, the public servants of Queensland had nothing to fear when the former LNP government proceeded to use this new industrial relations system to sack 14,000 government workers. That is 14,000 public servants who suffered the ultimate betrayal under an LNP government from whom they were told they had nothing to fear. On 19 February this year the Premier wrote to the government workers of Queensland following the swearing-in of the Palaszczuk Labor government. In the letter addressed to our valued public servants, the Premier said the following of the Palaszczuk government's priorities for the Queensland public sector workforce—

From the outset, I want to assure you that the new government has the highest regard for the professionalism and independence of the Queensland Public Service.

That is why I have committed to restoring fairness for public servants and ensuring that the proper conditions exist for them to provide frank and fearless advice to government.

I assure the House that with this bill the Palaszczuk Labor government is delivering on the Premier's undertaking to the public servants of Queensland. The Leader of the Opposition was health minister when the former LNP government used its disgraceful industrial relations changes to sack 14,000 government workers including 4,800 health and hospital workers, 1,800 of them nurses and midwives. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition and the members opposite, who disgracefully slashed the working conditions of government workers, the Palaszczuk government will fulfil its commitment to restore fairness for public servants and will ensure that proper conditions exist for public servants to provide frank and fearless advice to government.

Recently the local impact of the former LNP government's disgraceful IR law changes in my electorate was highlighted for me when I met with delegates from the Australian Services Union representing members negotiating an enterprise bargaining agreement with the Ipswich City Council. These ASU delegates advised me of the impact of the former LNP government's IR changes on negotiations with the council and they told me of the ASU campaign to urge the Palaszczuk government to kick the goal and deliver the legislation that members working in local government need for a secure future without their working conditions being stripped away. They told me how the

former LNP government's lowest common denominator approach to award modernisation when reducing 18 local government industry awards down to one led to a stripping of conditions for many local government workers.

I spoke to delegate Rik McGloin and his wife, Leisa McGloin, who both work for Ipswich City Council and live in my electorate in Eastern Heights with their two children. Rik and Leisa told me why they think the former LNP government's laws were unfair and why they wanted them to change. Rik said that local government workers need to retain the conditions they deserve to sustain job security for current generations and for generations to come and to get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. Leisa said changes to the former LNP government's laws were very important for her planning her family's future. She said that no-one wants to lose these conditions, especially with rising cost-of-living pressures. She said that life would be very difficult without them. Another of my constituents from Yamanto said—

I have been with Ipswich City Council for 20 years, and some of the benefits that they are removing are why I have chosen to stay with the Council: long service, sick leave and job security. Without these, Council may struggle to retain or recruit experienced staff.

And the former LNP government would have had us believe that these local government public servants had nothing to fear from an LNP government! The Australian Services Union says negotiating its next agreement with Ipswich City Council under the current LNP IR laws would mean that for the first time in recent history the current and next generation of local government workers in Ipswich would be left with worse employment conditions than those they have inherited and enjoyed.

This bill will make a number of amendments to the Industrial Relations Act to achieve the Palaszczuk government's aim of restoring fairness to the working conditions of public servants. Importantly, this bill will also re-establish the independence of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission—an important cornerstone of our IR system that was undermined by the former LNP government. The bill will remove the December 2015 deadline to complete award modernisation and, importantly for the local government workers in my electorate negotiating an agreement with the Ipswich City Council, the bill's transitional arrangements address concerns of employee disadvantage surrounding modern awards and modern certified agreements made under the industrial relations arrangements under the former LNP government. This is a bill that delivers on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to restore fairness for public servants in Queensland. For their sake and for the sake of millions of Queenslanders who depend on their services, I am proud to support this bill.