




Speech By
Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

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ELECTORAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (8.02 pm): I think everyone wishes that the Deputy Premier had more time. Thanks for warming up the crowd.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr RYAN: They love it. They love every single moment of it. The louder they bleat, the more they have to hide.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr RYAN: Here they go. Wind them up. I love it. Thank you, Deputy Premier, for warming up the crowd.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Okay, everyone, you have had your fun. It is getting late in the night. The member for Morayfield has the call. Let's cool it off.

Mr RYAN: It ain't finished yet. We have got more to give them. We have more to dish up.

I rise in support of the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. What do the LNP have to hide? Why do they hate democracy so much? In all their contributions tonight we have seen an attack on those fundamental democratic principles of transparency, accountability and franchise—a very fundamental aspect of democracy, of our Westminster system. I would like to move through each of those particular elements in my contribution tonight. Secrecy should have no place in our democratic system—none whatsoever. The more you hide, the more you undermine our Westminster system, our democratic system.

I am pleased that the member for Mansfield is actually now making a further contribution because he made a good contribution earlier when he quoted Tony Fitzgerald, and I am going to do the same. On 29 January this year, Tony Fitzgerald said this about the member for Mansfield's government, the then LNP government—

The Government's casual allocation of benefits to supporters and donors was unfortunately reflected in its cavalier attitude to donation laws and its blatant nepotism, which was cynically endorsed by the Premier as "just the way of the world". These are, on any rational view, steps which will in time lead to serious corruption.

That is what Tony Fitzgerald said—the fellow that the member for Mansfield was so kindly quoting before—and he said it only a couple of months ago. He said it about the trajectory on which the LNP was taking Queensland. When all other states around Australia were tightening up donation laws and reinforcing transparency and accountability in their democratic systems, the LNP government was taking us backwards and making us the laughing-stock of Australia. They were taking us back to a time about which Queensland should be very ashamed, the Bjelke-Petersen time. As Tony Fitzgerald said, it was blatant nepotism. In response to the Premier of the time saying that it was just the way of the world, Tony Fitzgerald responded with, 'On any rational view, they were steps that would, in time, lead to serious corruption.' That was the trajectory on which the LNP was taking

Queensland—not a vision for our state that I share and certainly not a vision for our state that our party, the Australian Labor Party, shares, either. Secrecy should have no place in our democratic system—none whatsoever.

Mr Rickuss: So we're going to let the unions—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer.

Mr RYAN: Here is the member for Lockyer firing up again. Seeing as he has so much to say now, maybe the member for Lockyer can tell us who attended the secret fundraising dinner on 9 October 2014. The hilarious thing about it was that no-one knew where it was going to be. It was so secret that no-one knew who was going to be there, no-one knew who the guests were, no-one knew who was giving \$5,000 per head to attend. That was the vision that the LNP had for our state. That was the vision that they had for our state where not even their own political party knew the location of the fundraising dinner. How hilarious was that? I see the member for Lockyer did not want to share that list with us, either.

We also see forums like QForum, where we do not know who is giving the money, we do not know how much, we do not want to know what they have been promised and we do not know the deals. It is interesting that I refer to entities such as QForum because when he was referring to the North Sydney Forum, Professor Graeme Orr from the University of Queensland said—

These things were allegedly used as fronts, even as shams ... to disguise or hide donations and launder donations that could not have otherwise been made ...

We see this cloak of secrecy from the LNP in hiding their donations, hiding where money comes from, not telling us what it promised in return, not telling us what the deals are. It is not a vision that I share for Queensland and it is not a vision that the Australian Labor Party shares, either. We are committed to transparency. We are committed to accountability. We are committed to integrity in government.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr RYAN: The more they bleat, the more they emphasise what they are trying to hide. Why do they hate democracy so much? Why do they hate those democratic principles? The only good thing we can do is to correct the electoral gift disclosure threshold and return it to the \$1,000 limit, ensuring we have some transparency and accountability when it comes to political donations.

Interestingly, we have heard a few contributions from those opposite encouraging us to do what the feds are doing and saying that we should do what the feds are doing. There is probably a good reason why we should do something different and in fact it would probably be better if the feds do what we do. Let's have transparency and accountability at the federal level as well as the state level.

There is a postdoctoral fellow from the University of Melbourne, Dr Zim Nwokora, who says that there is probably a good reason why there are different thresholds at the state and federal levels, and that is because many of the things that state governments do often lend themselves more readily to corruption. He states—

States are often involved in large infrastructure projects and large financial interactions with corporations that have a very clear interest in political process.

Often the federal government is a little bit more removed from these sorts of contractual processes ...

Whether it is a boot camp, a quarry, a mining company, or some other entity which felt it needed to give a donation to the LNP while they were in government, it is very important that we have transparency, accountability and integrity when it comes to our donation regime in Queensland.

We also need the ability for individuals to be informed of those donations as quickly as they happen, and that is why I am very pleased to see that this bill will also facilitate a process towards the real-time disclosure of political donations which will reinforce our democracy because, as I said earlier, secrecy should have no place in our democratic system at all.

I also wanted to speak briefly about the franchise element, and that is about making sure that anyone who is entitled to vote is allowed to vote. During the last state election I came across numerous people who were turned away from voting because they forgot to bring their ID. When it was explained to them they could fill in a declaration and demand to vote, that process deterred them from voting even further. The very things that are connected to the ID requirement for voting are the very things that prejudice those most vulnerable: those who are illiterate, those who are poor, those who are in remote communities and those people who are Indigenous. Franchise is so important in a democratic state like Queensland. We should be doing things to encourage voting, not things to discourage voting, and we should be doing them all the time. We should not be making it more difficult.

Technology will eventually eliminate the concerns that those opposite have about possible multiple voting. The instances of possible multiple voting are so limited anyway that it is not of concern. Those instances have been the subject of many reports which have said that multiple voting is a very rare occasion. For those opposite who are very concerned about it anyway, technology will eventually address those concerns. It is important that we protect our democratic system because secrecy should have no place—

(Time expired)