




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

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PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

 **Miss BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (9.46 pm): Today I rise to speak in support of the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015. The community was not happy with the previous government because the previous government possessed an innate hypocrisy. At the same time they were cutting 14,000 public sector jobs, they were awarding themselves pay increases that are the equivalent of the average income of those in my electorate. At the same time that they were requiring government entities to cap their pay increases at a maximum of 2.2 per cent, they were enabling a tribunal to award themselves exorbitant increases into the future. The largess of the previous government stands in contrast to the rhetoric of belt tightening. This bill starts to change some of that.

We in this place consider ourselves leaders, but fundamentally leaders are not leaders if they do not lead by example. What sort of example is it if we in this place are asking Queensland's hardworking public servants to take an increase that is lower than the increase that we ourselves receive? Leadership is a privilege and an honour, and with the sacrifices involved in being in this place a level of pay is appropriate, but every single Queensland public servant I have met—nurses, radiographers and doctors in our hospitals; teachers, teacher aides and school cleaners in our schools; police, fire and rescue personnel; and so many other front-line hardworking essential staff—make sacrifices every day. We must not devalue their work in comparison to ours. This bill addresses that through the limiting of salary increases to be in line with the increases paid to the rest of the Public Service. If it is good enough for them with all they do for us, then it is good enough for us.

This bill overturns the Queensland Industrial Relations Tribunal pay increases from 6 April 2015 and recovers overpayments to us in this place. That is a good thing. Those opposite cannot accept it, they do not like it and they have not adjusted to the fact that they lorded it over Queenslanders for three years and Queenslanders responded by throwing them out. I can tell the House that we are the clean-up crew and we are just getting started putting things right.

During the campaign I came across a school cleaner in my electorate named Sharon. Sharon has diabetes and her husband, Colin, has a heart condition. Sharon was having trouble making ends meet. It had always been a struggle, but she took pride in the life that she had made for herself and her family. Cost of living only goes one way. It only gets more expensive each day. Sharon told me that it was getting harder and harder.

Numbers do not lie. Inflation is running at over 2.6 per cent. If one's pay is going up by only 2.2 per cent then the gap comes from savings or from household borrowing or from Queenslanders going without. For Sharon and Colin this came down to a choice between food and medicine. I for one cannot stand that in 2015 a fellow Queenslanders of mine has had to make this kind of choice. She works hard keeping our schools clean for our kids and she deserves more than that devil's choice. We can do better than this and we can motivate ourselves by making sure our decisions around pay are in line with that of public servants like Sharon.

We committed to these things in the election campaign. This justifies the faith of those who campaigned against the LNPs largesse and for the Labor Party's approach. Governance is important. Queensland Labor is the party that brought people transparency and accountability and we deliver again.

This bill restores autonomy to the Speaker and the Speaker's responsibility for the management of the Parliamentary Service. We will have a crossbench member on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. Crossbench MPs keep us honest—they did in 1988 and they will again now. They are an important part of the proper functioning of this place and an accountability mechanism. This importance should be reflected in a voice in the operation of this place.

My local member when I grew up taught me much about this place—the Hon. Jim Fouras, a former member for Ashgrove and former Speaker of this House. I refer to his submission to the Finance and Administration Committee. He stated—

The separation of powers and functions of the parliament, executive government and judiciary provide fundamental checks and balances in any truly democratic society. Unfortunately this is a concept that some find esoteric and this creates difficulty in understanding.

He also spoke about what he saw as the two key roles of the Speaker of this House, as inherited from our parent Westminster parliament in the UK. The first is to chair and control the proceedings in this House and the second is to represent the House separate and distinct from the government. Integrity begins in this House. If we cannot get it right here, how can we possibly get it right anywhere else?

I will leave the House with this thought. The average income in my electorate is just under \$40,000 for a full-time worker and \$30,000 for a part-time worker. This is several thousand dollars per year below the Queensland average. I will note and bring to the attention of the House that it is only half the pay rise that those opposite arranged to be awarded to themselves in the last term.

When public servants went in to negotiate with the previous government for cost-of-living increases, what did they find? They were told they could choose between a pay rise or workplace conditions like safety and training. They were told that they could choose to keep their jobs against contestability and outsourcing, but only if they passed up a cost-of-living adjustment to their pay. Queensland's front-line public servants have been treated shabbily by this crew opposite. We are going to do something about it, starting in this place.