




Speech By
Peter Russo

MEMBER FOR SUNNYBANK

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

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (10.31 pm): Mr Speaker—

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Chatsworth, you have had a pretty good go. I do not think the member for Sunnybank needs your assistance.

Mr RUSSO: I rise in this House to support the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and commend to the House the passing of this groundbreaking and significant piece of legislation. The bill will amend the Industrial Relations Act and the Industrial Relations Regulation. The policy objectives of this bill are to give effect to the government's election commitments and priorities relating to restoring fairness for government workers by reinstating employment conditions for government workers that were lost as a result of changes made in 2012 and 2013 to the Industrial Relations Act 1990.

When the Treasurer, the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships spoke in this House about the bill, he stated—

The ... Bill ... gives effect to the government's election commitments and priorities for industrial relations reforms. This bill abolishes those aspects of the LNP's industrial relations system that, if allowed to continue, would have irrevocably damaged the state's IR system and undermined the government's commitment to restoring fairness for government workers.

We do not have to look too far to find examples of Labor leaders who had a commitment to change and the passing of legislation to protect people who were doing it tough and only wanted a fair go. The date of 1 January 2015 marked 100 years since TJ Ryan was sworn in as Labor premier with a clear majority. This is what commentators of the day had to say about the TJ Ryan Labor government. I quote—

The TJ Ryan government arrived with a purpose and set to work with energy and urgency. Ryan himself was one of those Labor leaders that did not come from a union background. Rather, he had been a teacher. Ryan had a particular and clear interest in education. But his principal calling was the law, and he has been regarded then and since as possessing ... skill in understanding how the law and constitutional provisions might be used to advance socially and economically democratic agendas.

It was further stated—

TJ Ryan was to develop new approaches to the arbitration and conciliation of labour disputes, to support better conditions, to develop workers compensation (in association with a new State Government Insurance Office ...

From the time of TJ Ryan's election to this House he pursued a legislative program which led to the introduction of economic and social reforms aimed at improving standards of living and working conditions. TJ Ryan also brought about significant initiatives in empowerment, as in the case of the right of women to stand in this parliament and to be admitted to juries.

Those on the other side of the House just do not get it when it comes to speaking about unions and the good work they do in the community. On 2 September 2014, when making a speech to a large union audience in Wisconsin, President Obama said—

If I were looking for a good job that lets me build some security for my family, I'd join a union. If I were busting my butt in the service industry and wanted an honest day's pay for an honest day's work, I'd join a union. If I were a firefighter or a police officer risking my life and helping to keep my community safe and wanting to make sure that I come home safely to my family, I'd join a union. I'd want a union looking out for me.

That is what unions do: they look out for the worker so they get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. They make sure workers can return to their homes safely. This bill gives the workers of Queensland the protection and the respect they deserve. I commend the bill to the House. Bring on the vote.