




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Record of Proceedings, 2 June 2015

**PAYROLL TAX REBATE, REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
BILL**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (5.34 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. We opposed the previous legislation brought into parliament on 6 May 2014. I will restate what I said at the time I opposed that legislation. I am happy to see that the minister is changing things back, particularly in the area of licensed plumbing. In 2014 I said—

The Queensland plumbing industry, including major stakeholders such as the Plumbers Union Queensland, the Master Plumbers Association of Queensland and the Institute of Plumbing Inspectors Queensland, and licensed plumbers across Queensland are concerned that these proposed changes will have disastrous effects for the plumbing industry. These concerns include increased risk to public health and safety and the consequences of further deregulation of the water service industry, leading to increased costs for consumers and the destabilisation of the plumbing trade. We are very concerned about what the minister is proposing here because it means that unauthorised persons can put in meters and not those who have undertaken four years of hard work and training whilst being paid low wages to develop the skills, the technology and the knowledge of how to install water meters. We are not just talking about water meters in households but major buildings and major operations. These projects may also involve electricity issues which could mean the possible electrocution of people who are doing this work. Therefore, those people must be trained in this field. It is important to note that most apprenticeships are for four years in order to do diesel fitting, painting and other trades. Allowing someone who is not qualified to do the same work is a great threat to those who put themselves through training and TAFE. This goes against everything that this state has done in order to provide the appropriate training to all tradespeople right across Queensland.

The amendments relate particularly to the installation of water meters. KAP has a long-held view that the installation of a water meter is plumbing work that should only be performed by a fully qualified licensed plumber. We support the move to restore high standards to the Queensland plumbing industry by requiring the installation of water meters to be performed by fully qualified licensed plumbers. We also strongly oppose the former LNP government's decision to create exemptions that allow unauthorised persons appointed by a service provider to install a relevant water meter.

Although we support the decision to reverse the exemptions, the KAP is disappointed by the slow response to transition this work back to fully qualified licensed plumbers under the government's bill. The bill inserts new section 205 into the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2001, which provides unauthorised persons with a two-year transitional period in which they may continue to install relevant water meters provided certain preconditions are met. I can understand the government's intent in relation to that, but I believe that two years is a little too long for that transition. I believe there was a six-month transition period associated with the 2014 legislation but it will take two years to transition back. I believe a more rapid response is needed to mitigate the risks pointed out by the plumbing industry peak bodies in 2014.

With regard to payroll tax, the 25 per cent rebate is a great incentive for employers to engage trainees and apprentices. I think this will benefit the plumbing industry and other industries right across Queensland.

As I said, I opposed the changes made by the previous legislation. I believe that the change back will create a more accountable system and give the plumbing industry a bit of a confidence boost, especially in rural and regional Queensland. I do know one plumber who has left Western Queensland because it is difficult to find work out there. When jobs are taken away from plumbers, plumbers will be lost from rural and regional areas. I commend this bill to the House.