




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 27 March 2015

ELECTORAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (11.28 am), in reply: I rise to oppose the comments of the Leader of Opposition Business. We heard criticism from the opposition prior to this sitting week that there are not enough sitting days, we are not doing enough business and there is not enough question time. But today in the first week of this parliament we are introducing a number of pieces of legislation.

From what we have just heard from the opposition, they expect us to come back but not consider any bills or any second reading speeches for months. They do not want us to have any debate on any bills beyond the first reading for some months into the future. Instead, when we come back in the next sitting week and then the sitting week shortly after that, we will actually deal with the legislation before us.

I take the point of the four-week time frame. I also take the point that the opposition has not seen the detail of the bill, but let me assist the opposition on that. You have seen the detail of the bill because it is actually what existed in the legislation before you amended it. That will make it a little bit easier for you as you go through it clause by clause because you will know what it means. You can think, 'That's right. This is that threshold we lifted so we did not have to disclose anything.'

Mr SPEAKER: Members, perhaps we could all go through the chair.

Mrs D'ATH: My apologies, Mr Speaker. It is important that this House considers legislation. It is important that the parliamentary committees consider the bills that come through this House, but this is a piece of legislation that has had numerous submissions already from key stakeholders interested in political donations. It already went before parliamentary committees last time the former government actually lifted these thresholds. We have already heard from all the parties on why they opposed those thresholds being lifted and why they argued the \$1,000 threshold should remain as is. So I believe the time frame that is set is fair.

There is also another very important element in this—that is, the elements do not just go to political election disclosure, which we took to the election. It is a very clear election commitment that we are delivering on here.

Mrs Frecklington: So that means no consultation.

Mrs D'ATH: I take that interjection. The parliamentary committee will have the opportunity to consider this bill and will—

Mrs Frecklington: When?

Mrs D'ATH: It might just be that you have to work over the school holidays. We are committed to delivering our election commitment, but another important element of this bill is in relation to the chair of the CCC. Currently, we have an acting chair of the CCC and that acting position expires on 30 June 2015. It is a requirement and an obligation on this government to then fill that position. We believe it would be highly inappropriate to have to fill that with another acting position. We promised

the people of Queensland that we would provide an independent, permanent chair for the CCC, and that is what we should do. We have set about making that happen as quickly as possible by already advertising for this position, the chief executive officer and the two ordinary commissioners. But for the government to appoint a new permanent CCC chair under the new salary arrangements—

Mr STEVENS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. We are talking about the electoral bill, not the bill that the Attorney-General is now talking about. This is irrelevant to this matter.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the Attorney-General.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, the Leader of Opposition Business in the House should listen a bit closer. I am talking about the amendments in relation to the CC Act for the pension entitlements for the new chair of the CCC. What I am saying is that, to appoint the new chair under the new salary arrangements, that legislation needs to be passed through this House. You cannot offer a salary when there is no legislative ability to offer a pension equivalent to a Supreme Court judge's pension when that is provided for, and that is the purpose of these amendments. They need to be considered and they need to be introduced so that we can fix up the mess that the other side created. The LNP constantly reappointed the acting chair; in fact, they came into this House and they changed the rules so that they could keep reappointing the acting chair. That time frame lapsed and they just wanted to keep him there that little bit longer and that little bit longer again. I can assure the House that we are not going to rush through an amendment to try to extend that acting appointment for Dr Ken Levy.

We will do what we promised—that is, we will put in place the legislative requirements to allow us to provide for an appropriate salary so as to attract a high-calibre applicant to become the permanent chair of the CCC. That is why it is important that this legislation be considered by a parliamentary committee and be brought back to this House for debate—so that a permanent chair can be appointed before the acting appointment lapses—and that is why we ask this House to support the proposal that the parliamentary committee report back by 1 May.