




Speech By  
**Hon. Yvette D'Ath**

**MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE**

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**ELECTORAL (REDISTRIBUTION COMMISSION) AND ANOTHER ACT  
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (7.50 pm): I rise to speak in relation to this private member's bill and indicate that the Palaszczuk Labor government will be opposing this bill. We do this because we stand up for Labor principles. I stand up for the people of Queensland and with the people of Queensland to oppose the return of a gerrymander from the bad days of Joh. I stand with the people of Queensland to say now is not the time to create more jobs for politicians instead of jobs for ordinary Queenslanders. I stand with the people of Queensland who value one vote, one value.

I have listened to the contribution of the member for Mansfield and heard him say this is a serious debate, and it is. However, from what we have just heard one would think this is a very insignificant matter. The submissions from the member for Mansfield were that this is just updating the act, but it is so much more than that. Let's be clear what this bill proposes to do. It proposes to allow an external body that is made up of people not elected by the people of Queensland to decide whether there should be extra politicians, allow this extra body to be increased in numbers and require the LNP to approve who those members should be. So it is to expand the body, give the LNP the right to decide who goes on to it and then give them authority to decide how many extra politicians up to five.

The member for Mansfield claims that this is about transparency and accountability, yet even the LNP did not bring this bill before the House when they were in government. They are bringing it now because they are in opposition in a minority government and they will do anything they possibly can to try to win at the next election.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! Will members cease interjecting and allow the minister to be heard.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I ask for that comment to be withdrawn.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am sorry; was this by the member for Lockyer?

**Mrs D'ATH:** It was extremely offensive.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Lockyer, I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr RICKUSS:** I withdraw.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Palaszczuk Labor government is about supporting jobs. We are dedicated to jobs and strengthening the economy in this state. This is why this week we have put through the Building Queensland Bill. That is why we are debating the Jobs Queensland Bill. That is why we are pursuing Advance Queensland to create new innovation, new job

opportunities and new businesses in this state. It is Labor that is investing in jobs, infrastructure, health and education in this state, and that is what the people of Queensland want us to do. That is what the people of Queensland want us to be debating in this House each day, not coming in here slinging mud and looking for any opportunity to try to get a leg up to win the next election not based on policies, not based on the economy, jobs or policies of any sort, but to come in with these sorts of initiatives—initiatives that have not been widely consulted on. The member for Mansfield said to the committee when it comes to consultation—

**Miss Barton** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I would ask the member for Broadwater to cease interjecting, please. The minister has the call.

**Mrs D'ATH:** When asked by the committee what consultation had occurred in drafting this bill, the member for Mansfield said that he had consulted the LNP team and he and his wife had travelled around to some electorates including Vaughan Johnson's electorate. That is fine, but that is not consultation with the people of Queensland. They did not go to the election saying this is what they would do. Were they going to do it if they had formed government? Nothing was ever mentioned of this initiative until they ended up in opposition.

I want to take up this point about the size of the electorate. I get the arguments that those in regional seats find it difficult to represent their electorate because of the large size of their electorate and its geography, and that was recognised with the Goss reforms. There was bipartisan support to give a two per cent weighting. That was recognised. It is also recognised by the fact that regional members in large electorates get extra resources. They also get two electorate officers to help them represent their electorate.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Those issues are recognised but we cannot just look at a regional seat and say, 'It is hard to represent such a large geographic area so there must be an increase in a weighting to move away further from one vote, one value,' without looking at the rest of the state.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mrs D'ATH:** it is hard to represent a high-density electorate of over 30,000 voters—

**Mr Stevens** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Will the member for Mermaid Beach please cease interjecting as with a number of other members whom I will not name at this particular point in time.

**Mrs D'ATH:** It is just as hard for members—

**Ms Simpson** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** If the member for Maroochydore is going to interject, you need to do so from your own seat. I call the minister.

**Mrs D'ATH:** It is just as hard for someone in Brisbane Central, Surfers Paradise or even the seat of Mansfield where there is high-density living, when there are so many more people to try to reach out to and engage with in the nature of a member's work. We know in regional seats—

**Miss Barton** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Broadwater, I have asked you once before to cease interjecting. The minister has the call.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Every member in this chamber gets an equal vote. So to say that all of the constituents of a regional member do not count and that they do not have a say in this chamber is just misleading. For every single one of us once we get in here, it is one vote, one value; we are all equal, no matter what size the electorate and no matter how many voters.

I take the point about the size of the electorates. There is no justification for increasing the weighting from two to four per cent based just on the geography. I will say this, because I am the only one in this chamber who can say this. I have been a federal member and I represented over 90,000 voters with two extra staff—one office, two extra staff. It can be done. An honourable member can represent more voters. They can do their job properly.

**Mr Rickuss:** You got voted out. You got voted out.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I remind the member for Lockyer that I got a 17½ per cent swing—remember that.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Lockyer!

**Mrs D'ATH:** We have to take this argument of the LNP to a final conclusion. There are 89 seats in this parliament. There are 30 members of the federal parliament from Queensland and we are being told that 89 seats is not enough in Queensland; we need more politicians; we need an extra weighting for regional seats. They have not actually justified their argument. They have put no facts up. They have not consulted with the people of Queensland. It is all about trying to create extra seats and bringing back the gerrymander so that they can get back into government and stay there for a long time.

The Leader of the Opposition should know better. He more than anyone should know better. He came in in 1989, and the Leader of the Opposition knows the work that went on with the Goss reforms to actually come up with the system we have today. Those reforms had bipartisan support; they were important reforms.

The reason why they have not changed since is because no-one wants to go back to the bad old days of Joh Bjelke-Petersen and the gerrymander. Go out and consult the people of Queensland to find out what they really think. I am not saying that sometime in the future there will not be a need to increase the number of politicians in this House, but what I am saying is (1) you do not outsource it; and (2) the fact is that right now what this state needs and what the people of Queensland are crying out for is jobs, investment in infrastructure, investment in education and investment in health. That is what they want, not extra politicians.

When I go to my electorate and I am asked, 'What are you spending our taxpayers' dollars on?' I will tell them that I stand up for the people of Queensland and their jobs. I stand up for one vote, one value, and I stand up for the fact that we do not want a gerrymander back in this state. To paraphrase Paul Keating, this bill shows us what the LNP and the Leader of the Opposition are really all about. You can just see the Leader of the Opposition with a group of school kids on a tour around Parliament House talking about the Joh and Russ Hinze days, showing them pictures and telling them proud stories about the 'white shoe brigade', the public servants whose lives were destroyed, the honest cops who were punished and 'the joke'. Then the Leader of the Opposition smiles and proudly says, 'This isn't history, kids; this is the future.' This is serious. This is not a joke to me. This is about the people of Queensland and standing up for them.

**Ms Simpson** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! I have asked the member for Maroochydore to cease interjecting if you are not sitting in your own chair. Member for Maroochydore, you must not be interjecting. I call the minister.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I am passionate about this. This is not a minor change; it is not a technical change; it is not just modernising the act—it is a slippery slope, and one that I do not support.