




Speech By  
**Michael Hart**

**MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH**

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Record of Proceedings, 24 May 2016

**PENALTIES AND SENTENCES (QUEENSLAND SENTENCING ADVISORY COUNCIL) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (8.57 pm): I have this sudden feeling of déjà vu. About four or five hours ago I stood in this place and said that the government of the day is all about reversing the good work that the previous LNP government had done. The minister stood up and said that was not the case, but here we go again. It does not matter what we did; those opposite say it is bad. It is ideologically driven by the Labor Party that whatever we did needs to be urgently reviewed, urgently undone, urgently reversed. That is what is happening here. However, 'urgently' takes this government a year and a half to do. Imagine how we will go with the state budget in a couple of months time. It is going to take forever.

We have here a government quango that cost \$1.8 million a year to run and does not actually achieve anything. We have heard from numerous members tonight about the results of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Committee. One needs to look no further than the statement of reservation of the LNP members on the committee to see exactly what happens with the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Committee. It would do members opposite a world of good to sit down and read the statement of reservation that is contained in about every committee report coming out of this government. The statements of reservation make a lot of sense. The LNP members on the committee sit and listen to the evidence presented to them and come up with logical conclusions.

The members on this committee reported in their statement of reservation that the previous sentencing advisory committee did not provide any advice in terms of guideline judgements to the Court of Appeal between 2010 and 2012 when it was abolished. They also noted that in other jurisdictions similar bodies exercised their functions extremely infrequently. Those bodies do not actually achieve what it is their governments intended. The LNP committee members stated that the functions of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Committee could be readily performed by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. They noted that 'education of the community' implies there is a lack of community knowledge and understanding of sentencing matters, which is a view rejected by many members of the community.

During the debate it was interesting to listen to the member for Morayfield. He stood in this place and said that he had done a Google search that had come up with one report. The member sat over there for the past two hours and listened to the debate. He went to his iPad or iPhone, did a Google search and came up with one 130-page report. I am told that, from the committee's inquiry, even the department did not know about that particular report. That is interesting. The member for Morayfield could find one report. This is a \$1.8 million bureaucracy and all the member can find is one 130-page report.

I am not sure whether the members on the other side are capable of using a calculator. Their smart phones probably have a calculator function. Have they bothered to divide \$1.8 million by 130, which is the number of pages in that report? A little while ago I dragged out my smart phone and had a

look. A \$1.8 million report that is 130 pages long costs \$13,845 per page. Does the member for Morayfield think that a government bureaucracy report is worth \$13,845 per page? The problem with those opposite is that they have no concern about wasting other people's money. The money that they are wasting belongs to the public of Queensland.

**Mrs Smith:** Taxpayers.

**Mr HART:** Yes, it is \$1.8 million that belongs to taxpayers. I can tell the member for Morayfield that the previous LNP government scrapped the Sentencing Advisory Council because it cost \$1.8 million. Let us keep this simple: this is a waste of \$1.8 million and that is why we oppose the bill.

In the time that I have left, I will talk about the amendments that the Attorney-General will shortly seek to move. This is another case of a lack of notice and a lack of consultation from a government that tells us constantly that it is all about transparency, accountability and consultation. Where was the consultation on this amendment? The only consultation we have had—

**Mr Walker** interjected.

**Mr HART:** I take the interjection from the member for Mansfield. The people of Queensland read about it in the newspaper this morning. Is that the level of consultation that this government thinks is acceptable? I for one do not think that is any form of consultation at all. The people of Queensland deserve the right to look at legislation that is introduced into the House, give feedback to their members of parliament and have input. Again, the people of Queensland have not had that opportunity. The members of this parliament have not had that opportunity. We have had only since this morning to consider this amendment.

The explanatory notes to the amendment that the Attorney-General will move state, in part, that the aim of the legislation that she is attempting to defer is to exclude participants in criminal organisations from working in certain licensed occupations. Are we to take the deferral of this law to mean that the Labor government is happy to have participants in criminal organisations working in licensed occupations? That is about all one can take from it.

**Mrs Smith:** Yes.

**Mr HART:** I take the interjection. You cannot read anything else into this amendment. By supporting this amendment, members opposite are, in fact, giving a big tick to criminals working in licensed occupations. That is the simple fact behind this amendment. Let us not overcomplicate the matter. Let us keep it clear and simple: here we have a \$1.8 million bureaucracy that serves no purpose that we can see and amendments are to be put to this House that seek to allow people in criminal organisations, such as the bikies who are causing such a big problem on the Gold Coast, to participate in certain licensed occupations. I do not know about those opposite and I do not know about other members of parliament in this place tonight, but I will not support people who are criminals in any fashion whatsoever, whether or not they are participants in licensed occupations. I will not support criminals, at all. I will not be supporting this bill.