




Speech By
Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

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**ELECTORAL (IMPROVING REPRESENTATION) AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (3.21 pm): It is with some surprise and pain that I rise to speak in this debate on the Electoral (Improving Representation) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I spoke about some matters earlier in the week as to why I am disappointed that the member for Mansfield got the support of the House to ignore the practice of not having to reconsider and not voting again on matters that have been dealt with by a parliament in the same term of parliament. However, I respect—and I will be reminded by people of this as we go along—that this House is its own master. I understand that this House is its own master and I respect that utterly. I trust everyone else will respect that. That is why it is important we debate this matter today in a sensible and respectful way. We should do so in a way that accepts that this House is its own master, but I ask this House to reject this bill. I ask the House to reject this bill because it is wrongly motivated and it is the wrong time. These are the same arguments that those of us on this side of the House made when the Electoral (Redistribution Commission) and Another Act Amendment Bill was debated in October. The reasons we put then are the same reasons we put now. I feel like we are invoking in the chamber the great American baseball manager Yogi Berra: it is *deja vu* all over again. We are getting that experience here today having had this experience in October last year, but the arguments on this side of the House remain the same.

Now is not the time when so many people right across the length and breadth of this state are concerned about their job security and are looking for employment and jobs. The time of this House should be devoted to how we can support our economy to grow jobs and grow opportunities for Queenslanders right across the length and breadth of Queensland. We should not be spending our time creating jobs for more politicians. We should not be creating four more jobs in this chamber; rather, we should be striving to create the thousands of jobs that we want to see right across the length and breadth of this state.

I am very proud to say that this government during the time we have had debates on this topic a number of times in this chamber has been focused on jobs for Queenslanders. That is why we see our job creation record starkly strong in comparison to the record of those opposite when in government, but that is not the issue we are debating today. We are forced to debate this matter because the House is the master of its own activities and its own decisions. We respect that, but I ask the House to reject this proposal to increase the size of the Queensland parliament at this time.

I do so because we want to make sure that we are focused on the things that are important to us. We want to focus on jobs for Queenslanders, not jobs for politicians. Earlier in the week I saw David Crisafulli, the former local government minister and former member for Mundingburra, wandering around George Street. He obviously had a sniff of something going on; that there were jobs coming up

in the chamber. He is lining himself up for those opportunities. We have to be focused as a House on making sure that we support jobs for Queenslanders. I am not maligning Mr Crisafulli. I encourage his ambition—

Mr Dick: And his participation in democracy.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: That is right, but I think he can amply achieve that ambition with 89 seats in the Queensland parliament. He does not need to have his mates and others secure an extra four slots to have that opportunity. I want the House to be its own master and to reject this proposal. When we look at the detail, all it will do is hamper the process of democracy. We heard from the Attorney-General that there is no explanation or justification for the expansion of the Redistribution Commission. There is no evidence that this commission of three, which has been in place since 1991 in this state, has been some sort of failure or manifest problem. There is no challenge in that regard.

In terms of the appointment process, there have been no suggestions, as far as I can see, that there has been a manifest failure in the way those electoral commission appointments have been made to provide the independent, rigorous process that they do. I can assure the House, having been through the process of a redistribution while a member of this House, that people on the government side are not always happy with how it works, and that is how it should be. It should be fair and independent, and it has been over the past 20 or so years. I do not accept the view that there is a manifest need to change the nature or make-up of the commission.

As a consequence of what is proposed, the Attorney-General will need to start the process again if this bill with those elements are successful. This House needs to be the master of how many members we have in this House and the master of the process which fairly and appropriately conducts the redistribution. That is why we should oppose this bill before the House—not just because we are doing it all again but also because it remains the wrong time and the wrong action.

We on this side of the House do not support more jobs for politicians. We want to focus the time of this House and our government on supporting Queenslanders to get more jobs for them and their families. That is why we should oppose this bill. In particular, we should oppose the way in which it has been brought back to this chamber. I ultimately accept that the House is its own master and that those people who secure the numbers secure the result. I completely accept that. I look forward to everyone accepting those decisions as the day goes on.

I encourage members in the House to oppose the Electoral (Improving Representation) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill because the detail is wrong and the detail is flawed. The detail will cause a delay and challenge to the redistribution process, which may result in the state going to the next election with the boundaries as they currently are because the process has not been finalised. That would, in effect, create a malapportionment and a distortion of the numbers at the next election. I encourage members to vote against the bill because of that detail. I fundamentally call upon all members of the House to oppose this bill because now is not the time for more jobs for politicians. Now is the time to be focused on more jobs for Queenslanders and their families right across the length and breadth of this state—not an extra four politicians.