




Speech By
Hon. Bill Byrne

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Record of Proceedings, 24 February 2016

**FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (DOMESTIC SMOKE ALARMS)
AMENDMENT BILL; FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (SMOKE ALARMS)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (5.45 pm): This motion is about good public policy for Queensland. There are a number of matters that need to be put to the final product on which this House decides about the various bills that are before the House. The private member's bill that has been presented is in many ways different from the government bill before the House. The difficulty is that those differences will not be fully interrogated by committee prior to that bill coming forward. If there are any political motives that are evident, the motion moved by the opposition this morning deliberately intended to spear this motion. This motion is a purely political motive to try to subvert the prospects of the House determining what is best for Queensland.

What is best for Queensland is a fully ventilated and understood set of circumstances. There are three pieces in play here. There is the private member's bill, there is a substantively different government bill, and over the top of that there is a federal Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee that will report subsequent to the tabling of the report on the private member's bill. That Senate committee will have substantial influence over how the nation approaches these issues and would certainly be a very worthwhile contribution to discussions by our own committee going forward.

I am not questioning the motives about this. We can stand here and say there is political advantage being taken one way or another. I do not ascribe to that. What I do ascribe to is that we need to have properly informed debate on bills. We need those bills to be well prepared through the committee process and committees need to have the full opportunity to ventilate all of the issues. If our motion is defeated, I fear that that will not be the case. I do not think it is a very sensible thing for this House, and the determination of this House, to be moving forward in the absence of a federal Senate committee report which I believe will be very influential in terms of the final report that should be provided by this committee. I put the point that the merits of the two bills need to be considered together because it is a much more holistic outcome, one that will drive the sentiment of this debate when it is brought forward to the House. Secondly, the Senate review that is being undertaken needs to be considered by the committee. It should be of influence inside the committee before it reports back to the House.

In terms of developing good, robust, sensible policy that ends up in legislation in this House, it defies logic that that is not the sentiment or the will of the opposition. The opposition have clearly been running a political game with this from day one. If there is an allegation of wanting to have fingerprints on it, the actions of the opposition have all been about fingerprints. If they were not worried about fingerprints on it, they would not have moved the motion earlier today to try to gazump—which was the word used—this discussion. It is the will of the House that should prevail, and that will should reflect what is best for Queenslanders.

At the end of the day, regardless of where we sit in this House, the idea is to have the very best policy and the very best piece of legislation that has got all of the information available to the House in order to have an informed debate. That is all that our motion is about. Our motion is making sure that all of the information is available, that it is properly ventilated, that substantive differences that exist between the bills are understood by the committee and that we get a fulsome, accurate and up-to-date report back from the committee. There is nothing more to it than that. I urge the House to support this motion.