




Speech By  
**Jarrold Bleijie**

**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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Record of Proceedings, 6 March 2018

**EDUCATION (OVERSEAS STUDENTS) BILL**

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (12.21 pm): I understand why the minister wants to trivialise the matters and be happy and funny about it. She has a history of stuffing up legislation and is always coming in here moving amendments to legislation that she has neglected.

**Mr Stevens:** What about the racing legislation?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach. I was going to get to the old racing bill at about 25 minutes. However, now that the member has mentioned it, I can point out that this minister was the one who introduced the racing bill and there were more amendments than clauses in the bill.

**Ms Grace:** I didn't introduce it.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection from the minister. I apologise. She did not introduce it but then had carriage of it. She always blames poor Billy Byrne, the former member for Rockhampton; it was all his fault that the member had to oversee the 300 or so—

**An opposition member:** It was everybody else's mistake.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It always is. In relation to these amendments to Easter trading, the minister has now blamed the stakeholders. The stakeholders neglected to tell her during the debate last year on the trading hours. This is an education bill but it is *deja vu* at Easter. Easter is around the corner and we are debating Easter amendments because this government hates Easter and they keep forgetting about Easter. We have *deja vu* all over again! Last year we had to amend the public holidays legislation to declare one of the Easter days a particular public holiday. However, the minister forgot to amend the allowable trading hours legislation to allow businesses to open on the public holiday. Just before Easter last year, just like now, we were forced to amend the allowable trading hours legislation because of that mix-up. Now, on the eve of Easter, we are again amending legislation because the government cannot get its legislation right. The minister has form in terms of it being everybody else's fault. It is not her department's fault; it is not her office's fault; it is not her fault.

**Mr Stevens:** Like the racing bill.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Like the racing bill, it is the stakeholders' fault. They did not tell her about it. The stakeholders did tell the minister about it and that is why we have these amendments before us. The minister did not come up with these great amendments; it was the National Retail Association who said, 'Oh, there is a problem and we need another amendment,' otherwise these big businesses would not have been able to open. The minister talks about irony. Let us talk about facts. Every year before Easter we are amending legislation because the government has mucked it up and cannot get it right. We would have thought by now they would know when Easter is. We would have thought by now that—

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Without anticipating debate on other bills, we have liquor reforms coming in because they just realised the Commonwealth Games are coming up as well and they have to amend legislation. The Labor Party have form in terms of having to amend legislation because they cannot get the basics right at the very start.

I digress. The bill is an education bill but, of course, these amendments are contained in it. If we read the title of the bill, the Education (Overseas Students) Bill 2018, we would think it is all about the education of overseas students. We would not have any idea there would be amendments moved dealing with the particular matters as the minister has foreshadowed. The member for Currumbin and I were having a discussion yesterday and we thought it odd that the title of the bill was not 'education (overseas students) and other matters amendment bill' as is customary in this place.

**Mr Hart:** It might be another omission.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It might be another omission. If it is an omission, I would be happy to support an amendment from the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations during the consideration in detail to amend the title of the bill to properly reflect the subject.

If the minister came in here and said, 'It is an amendment we are moving after the bill has been introduced,' I would accept that, but it is not. It is because the minister introduced this at the last sitting. They then had to move a motion for the bill to be declared urgent so the committee could deal with this matter and the amendments were contained in the bill. Therefore, the title of the bill should be 'other amendments' or, more appropriately, 'education (overseas students) fixing up Labor's continual Easter stuff-ups bill'. As I said at the beginning of the year when we found out about this, it was the great Easter bungle.

The minister spent a fair bit of time talking about hot cross buns. She is fond of hot cross buns, and I accept that and appreciate that. I like a hot cross bun as well. I buy them from my local bakeries. I support Parklands Bakery, my little local baker, as well as B Fresh bakery. The reality is that the minister is trying to make fun of an issue in which she has neglected her portfolio responsibilities in terms of the proper amendments to legislation. If the minister did not neglect her portfolio responsibilities we would not be debating the Easter amendment prior to Easter. We would not have had the urgency declared for the committee to look at the bill and for us to debate it. It is quite odd we would have the great Easter hot cross bun bill contained within the Education (Overseas Students) Bill. That is the reality.

I know the minister is embarrassed by the whole thing. I know she is embarrassed that every year before Easter she has to move these amendments. I really do feel for her. I have never been in that particular situation.

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I think the member for Kawana is making a giant leap insinuating my feelings at the moment. I take offence and I ask that those comments be withdrawn.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Pugh): Member for Kawana, do you withdraw?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Kawana, I would also ask that you direct your comments through the chair instead of referring directly to the minister.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations would be embarrassed—should be embarrassed—by the amendments she is moving. I would love to say that I—

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I had just taken offence to the member for Kawana insinuating that in some way he knows how I am supposed to be feeling at the moment. I took offence and I asked that he withdraw. He withdrew it. He then repeated it and I ask that he withdraw again.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Madam Deputy Speaker, it is not a personal reflection when I say the minister should be embarrassed.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Kawana, do you withdraw?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw. The Minister for Industrial Relations stuffed up this legislation. If any other minister had to come in here year after year to move amendments to legislation before Easter, as she has done, it would show a high degree of incompetence. The minister should be embarrassed by the continual stuff-ups and the continual amendments she has to move before Easter every year to get her own legislation in order. It is a dereliction of her duties and ministerial responsibilities that she cannot

seem to get this right. For two to three years we have now had to debate amendments because Easter has come on particular dates and we are now fixing the legislation through this amendment in the Education (Overseas Students) Bill.

I would like to deal with the education aspect of the bill, which is actually the title of the bill and what this bill is about. International education is one of the biggest service export industries in Queensland, generating almost \$3 billion a year in export revenue and sustaining approximately 20,000 jobs. The majority of the changes proposed in this bill were introduced in the previous parliament but lapsed when the parliament was dissolved for the election. This bill picks up those same changes with a couple of additions. In response to a recommendation of the previous committee, amendments have been made to ensure that the information or documents obtained by the regulator or authorised compliance officers under a help requirement cannot be used in proceedings other than for offences created by the bill or about the false or misleading nature of the information or document as intended to better safeguard rights against self-incrimination. Secondly, the bill's amendments to the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990 are intended to address an inadvertent omission made when the act was amended in 2017. Those are the minister's words, not mine.

The other key objectives of the bill provide a new regime for the regulation of providers of courses to overseas students and international student exchange programs; provide the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority with functions to administer new senior assessment and tertiary entrance systems commencing for students entering year 11 in 2019—incidentally, my daughter is entering year 11 in 2019—and make minor and technical amendments to the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 and the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000. No submissions were received by the committee in response to this bill; however, that may have been because most of the issues had been canvassed previously when the bill was considered last year. In terms of Easter trading hours, members may have seen the front page of the *Courier-Mail* on 19 January this year with the headline 'Hot cross bungle'. That was in relation to the minister's bungled attempt to regulate the trading hours that were made in the previous parliament.

In relation to the changes regarding overseas students, the current approach is through a cooperative legislative model with the Commonwealth. The cooperative model includes the Commonwealth legislation and the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 and Queensland's Education (Overseas Students) Act 1996. Currently, schools must meet the requirements of the Commonwealth and Queensland legislation and be registered on both the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students—known as CRICOS—and the Queensland register. The bill modernises Queensland's legislative framework to achieve closer alignment with the national framework.

In December 2014, the former LNP government announced proposed changes to senior assessment and tertiary education systems following an independent review of the system by the Australian Council for Educational Research. I want to place on record and pay tribute to the former LNP minister for education, the member for Surfers Paradise, John-Paul Langbroek, who did a stellar job when he was the education minister. We are debating this legislation because of the great work that he did when he was in government as the education minister.

These changes move away from the OP—or overall position ranking—and Queensland core skills test. Of course, as is the case under Labor governments, this important reform has been delayed by a year. The current OP system has been in place since 1992. All other Australian states and territories use the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank—ATAR—rather than the OP. In relation to the assessment, since 1972 Queensland has employed school based senior assessment in which assessment activities are developed and marked by teachers. A system of external moderation is used in which samples of completed students' work are validated by panels of expert teachers. When the LNP first considered these changes, all Australian states and territories used some form of school based assessment. Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory are the only jurisdictions which do not also use subject based external examinations.

The bill also makes minor and technical amendments to the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 and the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000. It is disappointing that the government has missed the opportunity to use these changes to bring in its so-called no-card no-start policy, which was a priority in the middle of the state election but now apparently is not. In November last year the former education minister, Kate Jones, said that Labor would close the blue card loophole and ensure that only checked and approved people would be able to work with children in Queensland. All of a sudden it is not a priority.

In November last year there were over 5,000 people working with children while their applications were still being processed. The question is: how many is it now? This apparent loophole fundamentally undermines the blue card system and key child advocates, including Bravehearts founder and chair Hetty Johnston, have recently said, 'This is a change for the safety of our kids we're talking about here. It should have been done yesterday. People never should have been allowed to work with children without a blue card in the first place.' Labor's so-called no-card no-start policy was announced in the wake of a scandal in Townsville last year where a teacher's aide who did not hold a blue card allegedly showed images of himself to three young boys at a local primary school. It is typical of Labor to say one thing before—in this case during—an election and do another after. Returning to the minister's favourite topic and getting back to where I started this contribution—

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Do not look at me like that. It is terrible, nasty. On the subject of trading hours, in particular with regard to Easter trading, as I said, this is the third year in a row we are debating changes around trading hours on weekends. In 2016, seemingly out of the blue, Labor changed Easter Sunday to make it a public holiday because it was not involved in the Mickel review on industrial relations, but the only thing was that the minister forgot to change the trading hours legislation that related to businesses being able to trade on that day. We came back here in early 2017 to change the trading hours legislation to fix that bungle by the minister. Then last year the minister managed to cobble together support to get her beleaguered trading hours changes through the parliament in a complete about face on the whole justification of the laws in the first place. There were 32 amendments at the last minute. As a legacy of that completely rushed and bungled process we have come back here in 2018 to fix it up again because the minister has a track record of continually bungling legislation. We saw it with the racing bill—

**Ms Grace:** In your dreams!

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It is not my dreams; it is reality. It is fact. We only have to look at the bungles and the amendments that the minister had to make. I do not go home and dream about the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations' bungles in the parliament. I deal with realities and facts. *Hansard* will show that for the last three years you have been debating the evidence.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Pugh): Minister for Education!

**Mr BLEIJIE:** We saw it with the racing bill. We have seen it with industrial relations changes and trading hours changes over and over again. It is not so much an issue in the parliament; it is about chopping and changing the goalposts. How are businesses in this state supposed to operate with so much uncertainty? Labor does not understand business because they are beholden to the union movement. This is the minister of the unions, by the unions and for the unions. It is another complete Easter stuff-up yet again and it is simply not good enough. When is it time for the Premier to say, 'Minister for Industrial Relations, enough is enough. The stuff-ups have to stop'? Has the Premier eyeballed the Minister for Industrial Relations? Has the Premier got up and said she is furious?

**An opposition member:** I would not be game.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take that interjection. I would not be game to eyeball the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations either, being the former union heavyweight that she is. Has the Premier eyeballed the Minister for Industrial Relations about the continual dysfunction in her department? Has the Premier been furious? Has the Premier been angry? Has the Premier been dissatisfied? I suspect it is all of the above.

**Mr Stevens:** No Easter eggs.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take that interjection. The minister can call it an administrative oversight and try to blame the department, the stakeholders, the opposition and everybody else, but it is because of her political incompetence in cobbling together a deal to get her failed trading hours reforms through the parliament with the crossbenchers that 32 amendments were rushed and this error was made. That is what happens when you cobble together a deal with the Katter party and other crossbenchers at the last minute. They made 32 rushed amendments and now we have to deal with this again and again. Albert Einstein said that doing the same thing over and over again but expecting a different result is the definition of insanity. Enough said, Minister, time and time again.