



Speech By  
**Jarrold Bleijie**


**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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Record of Proceedings, 17 May 2018

**MOTION**

**Referral to Education and Small Business Committee**

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (5.00 pm): This announcement was made by the Premier with the comrades on Labour Day. Last year on Labour Day it was the labour hire inquiry that the Premier announced in front of all the unions. Each year at the Labour Day march we see a bit of union payback so I was expecting something big this year. Little did I expect this motion. If we look back in the history of time, back when Cameron Dick, the Minister for State Development was, in fact, the industrial relations minister—

**Ms Jones:** A great minister!

**A government member:** He was.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection from the member for Cooper who said that the member for Greenslopes was a great IR minister and then he confirmed he was. The humility and the hubris of the member for Greenslopes! While we are talking about the member for Greenslopes, when Julia Gillard asked the states to refer all the industrial relation powers to the Commonwealth when the member for Greenslopes was the industrial relations minister, what did he say? Anna Bligh was the premier and the minister for industrial relations said, believe it or not, when he referred powers to the Commonwealth—

The finalisation of this referral bill has been a significant and major piece of work. Negotiations with the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions have been conducted over a period of time and with constant regard to the rights of the Queensland workforce.

...

I strongly commend the bill to the House.

Now we have a state based parliamentary inquiry into wage theft in relation to the industrial relations system that he referred to the Commonwealth. He said at the time that it was a great referral. He said, 'Julia Gillard, leader of the federal Labor Party, I will do whatever you want. You can have all the industrial relations powers from the state', and referred it to the Commonwealth. It gets better. The Minister for Education, who is the current industrial relations minister, at the time was the member for Brisbane Central. This is what the former member for Brisbane Central said about this piece of legislation—

In conclusion, this bill strikes, in my view, the balance in establishing a national IR system but respects state rights at the same time. It is in the best interests of workers and business.

The former member for Brisbane Central said in Mackay that the industrial relations referral was in the best interests of workers and business.

There are more than enough safeguards and protections for workers' pay and conditions—more than Work Choices ever gave any worker in this country. I commend this bill to the House.

If Julia Gillard's laws are so good, why are we now debating a motion about those very laws that they got rid of? The Liberal National Party is consistent in its approach. We opposed the referral of the industrial relations system to the Commonwealth because we knew there would be concerns raised in

the future. We are always hesitant to give up state based rights, particularly with respect to the industrial relations system. The former minister for industrial relations got up in Mackay and was happy to refer it: 'Yes, Julia Gillard, I will do whatever you want and refer it.'

Those opposite had nothing else to talk about on Labour Day, because they have done everything the union movement bought them off to do, so out of the blue comes this motion to look at wage theft through unpaid superannuation, the misuse of ABNs and sham contracting arrangements. They are all federal government responsibilities. Those opposite talk about sham contracting; this motion is a political sham. It was only designed so the Premier could get up in front of the comrades, their union mates, and say, 'We still love you. We are still doing everything you want us to do.'

The unionists at the Labour Day march were chanting and acting surprised—as if they did not know about this announcement from the Premier. As if they did not know about the announcement of this inquiry into wage theft and other related matters! It is on the basis of absolute hypocrisy and, as I have said all week on various matters, the arrogant Labor government says one thing in opposition and does another thing in government like it is wiped from the pages of history.

If those opposite want a fair dinkum review into wage theft I will move an amendment so that we can have a fair dinkum review and the parliamentary committee can look at other important matters that Queenslanders feel left behind about by the Labor government. I move—

That the following words be inserted after 'preventing wage theft':

- '(h) Current and former nurses and other health staff who have unresolved disputes from Labor's failed health payroll debacle;
- (i) Concerns that have been raised in the media and the parliament about the payment of contractors, including security guards, from the recent Commonwealth Games; and
- (j) The use of contractors, consultants and labour hire workers in the Queensland public service.'

The reason I move that amendment to the substantive motion is as a result of a story in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* from 13 May 2018 titled 'Commonwealth Games security staff claim wages have not been paid' and an article on 9 May in the *Courier-Mail* titled 'Public servant reporting system "encourages inaccuracy"'. One of the state's largest unions has called for an overhaul of how public servants are counted claiming current statistics are not realistic as they exclude contractors, consultants and labour hire workers.

A few weeks ago we saw a story in relation to the absolute blowout of the Public Service in Queensland and now the union is saying that that blowout does not include contractors, consultants and labour hire workers employed by the Labor government. Together Queensland branch secretary Alex Scott said the current counting method, the minimum obligatory human resource information, was acting as an incentive for greater use of the labour hire workers, consultants and contractors by departments to avoid accurate reporting of staffing levels within the Queensland Public Service. I think that deserves looking at because that is actually a Queensland matter. That is actually something that the Queensland industrial relations minister has carriage of.

The matters contained in the motion moved by the Premier are all federal matters. We are moving sensible amendments dealing with state based matters. The nurses who are still suffering from Labor's payroll debacle, the biggest maladministration in Queensland's history, deserve answers. When Cameron Dick was the health minister he sent debt collectors after these nurses for the likes of \$400.

We raised that in the parliament. Despite the poor nurses writing letter after letter and parliamentarians writing letter after letter to no avail, after I asked a question of the Premier the former health minister stood in this parliament and said, 'We'll look at it.' All of a sudden, that very day, the debt collector was called off. They are applying an ad hoc arrangement when matters are raised in this parliament. How many hundreds of thousands of nurses are still suffering years later, because Labor bungled the Health payroll? I think that needs to be investigated.

I think Together union branch secretary Alex Scott's concerns about the blowout in Public Service numbers and the inaccuracy of the reporting of Public Service numbers should be looked at by the parliamentary committee. That is what the Queensland parliamentary committee should be looking at, not federal matters. If the state IR minister has a problem with a federal matter, the Labor government should not have referred the industrial relations powers to the Commonwealth, which is what they did. The minister can shake her head all she wants, but she supported it. She voted for it. She said that state rights would be protected and that this is going to be the best thing for the workers. Is the minister now saying that she failed the workers of Queensland? I suspect so.

*(Time expired)*