




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNCILLOR COMPLAINTS) AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL
(IMPLEMENTING STAGE 1 OF BELCARRA) AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.22 am): Thank you for clarifying that, Madam Deputy Speaker. You would be a very tough Deputy Speaker if that was not the case.

I rise to speak on the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. Local government is an incredibly important level of government in our state and it is very important that the community has full confidence in it.

My electorate actually falls into two local government areas. I have at the north of my electorate the Moreton Bay Regional Council and at the south of my electorate the Brisbane City Council. It is basically an even split. I have a very good relationship with the two Brisbane City councillors who cover my area and also the two Moreton Bay regional councillors as well. We have a close relationship and work well together. I have full confidence in the way they go about their business. It is important that the public has the same confidence as I have.

As has already been mentioned in this House by numerous speakers, by far the overwhelming majority of councillors do the right thing. They are men and women of integrity. They normally have some background of community service and it is a natural progression for them to serve on their local councils. I pay my respect to those people. For those law-abiding councillors who do the right thing, these laws are about protecting their reputations.

We will support laws that give the local government minister more power to act. We have legitimate questions about the breadth of that power. We need to remember that these people are elected representatives of their community and are not public servants in the traditional definition of public servants. They are there at the whim and at the pleasure of those people in their wards and divisions around the state.

It is important that the minister has an ability to act, as he has already in this state. He does have the ability to intervene. That is why the shadow minister will quite reasonably move amendments to put in a review period for these laws. I have no doubt that the current minister would act appropriately, but we have to make sure that these laws apply to whoever is in the position of minister. A minister may have ulterior motives to move people out of positions simply for political reasons or for whatever reason they see fit. It is important that we have that review. That is why the shadow minister has proposed those appropriate amendments.

I will move to the Belcarra aspects of the legislation and the recommendations around developer donations. We understand the CCC's recommendations around the perception, at the very least, of local councillors being influenced by political donations. What we cannot accept in this legislation is the broadening of the CCC's recommendation around developer donations to councillors to include state government MPs. There has been zero evidence of that and zero investigation in relation to that.

I have heard a number of members of the government say—and I think the member for Capalaba was one—that the amendments we will move and our opposition to certain aspects of this bill are politically motivated. For someone from the government to say that our opposition and our amendments are politically motivated is laughable. That is the motivation of the government. They are bringing in these laws because they believe they will nobble this side of politics.

To bring these laws in and with a straight face say that they are not going to extend them to trade unions is laughable. There has been no evidence of developers unduly influencing state government MPs.

Mr Janetzi interjected.

Mr MANDER: I will take the interjection from the member for Toowoomba South, the shadow Attorney-General. There has been plenty of evidence that the trade unions have undue influence on state Labor government ministers. I will go through some of that evidence off the top of my head. I am sure there are many other examples. We have the influence of the ETU on the former energy minister and now Minister for Transport and Main Roads. The head of the ETU was emailing the minister of the day via private emails making recommendations—or was it giving instructions—on who should go onto the Energy Queensland board.

We have the same ETU head advising—or is it instructing?—the energy minister of the day about their involvement in huge superannuation mergers. These are serious issues. This has been done through back channels, not even through official communication channels. Again, we are seeing this influence on a minister of the crown, a Labor minister.

I think it is more than a coincidence that the same minister, in his new role as Minister for Transport and Main Roads, is heavily influenced, if not controlled, by the Rail, Tram and Bus Union in terms of the closed shop with regard to train drivers and signal men and women. What is their title? You know what I mean—the people at the end of the train.

Mr McDonald: The guards.

Mr MANDER: The guards—that is what they are. I take that interjection. Thank you for that. The closed shop arrangement here is simply unbelievable. We have seen the result of that—record amounts of overtime. I think it is something on average of three hours of overtime per day for each one of those employees. A train driver is earning close to \$190,000 per year.

Mrs D'ATH: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. This member is now talking about train issues and other matters far outside this bill and the proposed amendment of the opposition.

Mr MANDER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am talking about the influence of trade unions.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms McMillan): Please stay on the bill, thank you, member.

Mr MANDER: I can understand why the Leader of the House is very defensive about these types of issues, but this is an example of the influence that the trade unions have. They are not included in this bill but we have included them in our amendment because, if you want to do this for one section of the community, you need to do it for other sections of the community that have a direct influence.

I have not mentioned the QUT's influence on the education minister with regard to independent public schools. Slowly but surely they will erode one of the most successful policies introduced by the LNP government—one that is embraced by all school principals and the community as well. I will give another example of union influence, and that is the Together union with the Minister for Housing and Public Works on the Logan Renewal Initiative—a contract signed, sealed and delivered and a year and a half later ripped up because the Together union were worried about losing union members who were in housing service centres.

These are examples of the influence that trade unions have on state Labor ministers, yet they will still be able to donate to the Labor Party when other sections of the community—where there is zero evidence of influence on state government MPs—will not be able to donate. This goes beyond the CCC's recommendation. That is why we cannot support this aspect of the bill. That is why we are proposing our amendments. This is simply unfair. It is politically motivated. It is all about nobbling the opposition. That is why we will not support it.