



Speech By  
**Bruce Saunders**


**MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH**

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Record of Proceedings, 28 February 2019

**EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (3.45 pm): I rise to speak to the report *A fair day's pay for a fair day's work?* I remember that used to be the theme for my father and the many people he employed in his business, and I carried that on with my business. We have just heard from the deputy chair of the committee and we can see why the opposition will be on the opposition benches for many years to come, because they do not care about workers. This inquiry was not set up because of control by the unions; it was set up to find out what was happening to wages in Queensland and what was happening to people in Queensland. What the committee found as we moved through Queensland was an eye-opener. I would like to thank the member for Capalaba. I could not make some hearings because of family commitments and the member for Capalaba filled in for me on committee trips.

Let us have a look at wage theft. A report from the McKell Institute states—

Wage theft can take a number of different forms but generally relates to employers deliberately not paying employees their full entitlements including superannuation, award and penalty rates, leave and other employee entitlements. Wage theft—

That side supports wage theft, as we heard from the deputy chair. She supports wage theft in Queensland. We will not let that be forgotten. That will not be forgotten coming up to the federal election because that side supports wage theft.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence at the personal remarks he is making and I ask him to withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Weir): Order! Member for Maryborough, the member has taken personal offence.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Before you continue, there is too much cross-chamber chatter.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** How does wage theft occur? Again, I quote from the McKell Institute report which states—

The most common type of wage theft tends to be underpayment or non-payment of wages under a federal award ...

We heard during the inquiry that being punched by Fair Work Australia is like being punched in the head with a wet lettuce leaf. Fair dinkum! We have heard that people in Queensland had to talk to someone in Tasmania—

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Kawana, you are on the speaking list; you will get your turn.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** This is what happens in the employment arena. How does wage theft occur? This is what happens according to the McKell Institute—

1. Employees needing to “pay an upfront deposit” for a job
2. Employees needing to pay money back in cash to employers after receiving wages
3. Denying approval for paid professional development leave ...
4. Pressuring workers not to record overtime
5. Not paying overtime when it is claimed
6. Not paying or underpaying superannuation
7. Non-provision of meal breaks

I suppose if you worked at Muffin Break that would be okay. You might get free muffins but you do not get paid. The report continues—

8. Incorrectly classifying workers
9. Unpaid redundancies
10. Working for “free” whilst training

We know that has been happening. We know businesses have been calling in people for a week’s training and they have had 52 people come in for the year so they have not had to pay wages for 52 weeks. It continues—

11. Not paying staff to attend mandatory staff meetings
12. Payments in the form of food and beverages, not wages

That must be the Muffin Break business model. Where are the federal member for Hinkler and the federal member for Wide Bay? Crickets! The Labor candidate for Wide Bay was on the streets today in Maryborough. It hurts to say that in my community we have a Labor hire company working for Telstra called Rubicor, and it has been alleged today that they have not been paying superannuation since May last year. They have been paying no superannuation to their workers since May last year. As far as I am concerned, that is theft.

If an employee who worked for Rubicor took one pen, they would be charged with thieving. Why aren’t the directors of Rubicor charged with stealing and thieving from workers? It is time the chaos of this federal government was brought out. I am looking forward to a Shorten government. I am looking forward to Jason Scanes as the Labor member for Wide Bay. He will stand up for workers, he will make sure workers get paid and he will make sure workers get their entitlements—not like that rabble over there. They are thieves. All they do is take—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the House to order. Member for Maryborough, you have to expect some flak if you keep up that language. I advise you to tone your language down. You have 24 seconds left.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** We are looking forward to a federal Labor government and people who will look after workers’ entitlements. We hear from that side that small businesses are doing it tough. That is because they are pinching the disposable income of workers—that is why. The discretionary income has gone. I urge all Queenslanders to get rid of this chaotic federal government.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Maryborough, the word ‘thieves’ is unparliamentary. I ask that you withdraw it please.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I withdraw.