




Speech By
Daniel Purdie

MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

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**MINISTERIAL AND OTHER OFFICE HOLDER STAFF AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (5.52 pm): I also rise to make a very short contribution to the Ministerial and Other Office Holder Staff and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, otherwise known as ‘you probably shouldn’t employ criminals bill’. It has been a long two years waiting for Labor to cross the t’s and dot the i’s on simple administrative protections for staff in Queensland. This legislation responds to one of the more well-known integrity disasters of this government, the total number of which I have lost count. The reason behind the bill is the episode where the then Labor minister for child safety was busted for unwittingly employing a paedophile in her office.

As a new member of parliament I was pleased to say the least when the bill was referred to the Economics and Governance Committee for consideration, of which I was a former member. Not surprisingly, based on the commonsense value of the bill, the committee did not receive a single written or oral submission, just a tail between the legs briefing by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. You see, the bill simply puts in place what most of us would assume existed already. Apart from minor drafting errors in the bill that simply reflected the haste with which the bill was written, the committee recommended the bill be passed.

Let us go back to where it all began. As I alluded to, the genesis of this bill was a *Courier-Mail* article published in November 2017 which revealed a staff member of the then child safety minister, the member for Waterford, was a paedophile and had a criminal record for child pornography and had previously been convicted of three charges related to accessing and possessing child exploitation material in 2011. While the rest of Queensland and indeed the country collectively screamed, ‘How on earth could this happen?’, the Premier and the minister stuck to the Labor government’s playbook, taking absolutely no responsibility for this and instead blamed the Queensland parliament, claiming that it employed the criminal. During the Premier’s first reading of the bill over two years ago she stated that the bill provided powers to assess the suitability of a person to be engaged in a ministerial office. The Premier’s definition of ‘suitability’ clearly did not extend to her employment of her former chief of staff David Barbagallo, who still to this day remains under investigation for the—

Mrs D’ATH: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I have already raised this as a point of order previously in this debate. The opposition has been very selective in the wording in the explanatory notes and the bill in relation to ‘suitability’. The suitability goes directly to criminal history records only and to be talking about any other staffing matters are not relevant to the bill and I ask that the member be brought back to the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): I will take advice. In the short time that the member has, I ask him to come back to the bill.

Mr PURDIE: That aside, the key policy objective of the bill is to provide the director-general of the department—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House and the time allocated for this stage of the bill having expired, I will now put all remaining questions.