




Speech By  
**Hon. Yvette D'Ath**

**MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE**

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Record of Proceedings, 18 June 2020

**ELECTORAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION (ACCOUNTABILITY, INTEGRITY AND OTHER MATTERS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (5.25 pm), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate on the Electoral and Other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019. However, I have found the contributions of those opposite extremely disappointing. The rhetoric that we have heard and the lack of understanding of this bill—

**Mr Mickelberg:** We might have had a better understanding if we could have read the amendments.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I am talking about the bill itself. Some needed to even read the bill because some of the statements that have been made in this debate are completely wrong and show that those opposite have not even read the bill let alone any amendments. I will get to the amendments, do not worry about that. The willingness to completely disregard the views of other stakeholders—not the government, not political parties, not unions, but other stakeholders such as the Centre for Public Integrity, the Human Rights Law Centre—is appalling; to completely ignore their views, to ignore all the evidence, all the academic reports, all the research that has been done over many, many years after every single election saying the way to bring in integrity and take big money out of politics and the influence of money is expenditure caps, donation caps and increased public funding. That is the reality. Those opposite can stick their heads in the sand as much as they want, but that is the reality. There is so much evidence to support that and to deny that is denying the people—

**Mr Lister** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Southern Downs, you are now warned under the standing orders.

**Mrs D'ATH:** If Queenslanders want to get an insight into the pathology of those opposite, observing this debate would be quite enlightening for them I am quite sure. What I found most revealing was the absolute incapacity of those opposite to perceive these reforms through anything other than the prism of self-interest. Those opposite cannot conceive of a situation where a government would introduce electoral reforms because of their objective benefit to the community. They have no interest in levelling the electoral playing field or stopping the expenditure arms race or taking the stench of big donor dollars out of politics. Those opposite did not engage in any discussion on how these reforms would impact on our communities. They did not really want to discuss how it impacted the political culture. All they wanted to talk about was themselves—that is the difference. The Palaszczuk government is focused on providing for Queenslanders, the LNP just want to talk about themselves.

When those opposite were not focused on themselves, unfortunately they were keen to spend a fair bit of time talking about me. In particular, they wanted to know what exactly it was that I had been doing for the last four months, why they have only just seen the amendments. What could possibly have

been happening over the last four months? Let us have a think. They cannot be serious. A number of people on that side said, 'They've had four months! What have they been doing? Why are we only seeing the amendments now?'

Those on the other side must be suffering from memory loss. We know that they have completely blanked out the cutting, sacking and selling by the Newman government, but February 2020 was not that long ago. Let us be clear: on 7 February the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee tabled its report on this bill and on 29 January the Palaszczuk government declared that there was a public health emergency due to COVID-19. When those opposite ask what it is that we have been doing, the answer is pretty simple: we have been putting our shoulder to the wheel and dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. We have been dealing with COVID-19 and keeping Queenslanders safe.

**Mr Lister** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Southern Downs, two minutes ago I said that you were warned under the standing orders. You are now to leave the chamber for one hour. You will not be able to return during divisions.

*Whereupon the honourable member for Southern Downs withdrew from the chamber at 5.30 pm.*

**Mrs D'ATH:** We were mapping out the economic strategy to ensure Queenslanders could unite and recover. We were making sure that we could hold local government elections with zero COVID-19 cases connected to them. That is what we have been doing. Importantly, the stakeholders we need to engage with, who raised issues in the parliamentary committee process, were also busy dealing with COVID-19. After working through all of those issues, we were able to look closely at this bill and consult with the stakeholders who have raised fundamental issues. We hear rhetoric about the parliamentary committee process. On the one hand I was told that the parliamentary committee is a rubber stamp and then we were asked why we are introducing all of the amendments. We have introduced the amendments because issues were raised in a committee process.

Referring again to the memories of those on the opposite side, it is very convenient that they forget what they did in government. They forget what the Manager of Opposition Business did. He brought in 108 pages of amendments to the Directors' Liability Reform Amendment Bill and there were 17 urgency motions to declare bills urgent. When they were in government, they moved 17 such motions. What did those bills go to? The Criminal Code, the Parliament of Queensland Act, changes to the industrial relations framework—I can tell the member for Kawana that we all remember that one—and changes to the Crime and Misconduct Commission Act were all substantive matters that were rushed through the House.

Members on the other side love to refer to the changes on optional preferential voting, but even the change to compulsory preferential voting stemmed from a bill, as an urgency bill, that sought to increase the number of electorates and, consequently, the number of elected members in this parliament. Those opposite introduced that as an urgency bill and it did not go to any committee. Apparently, that is not important. That is the problem that confronts the opposition.

This government and I are very proud of these reforms. These reforms are nation leading. I hope that other jurisdictions and the Commonwealth—although I have zero faith—will look to introduce them. The only way that we will ever get these sorts of transparent and strong electoral laws at a Commonwealth level is with a Labor government. That is the only way that we will see these laws introduced at a federal level. These laws will provide balance. Lastly, I refer to the carry-on about the multiplication of the number of unions versus the number of seats, how much would be spent and how many signs could go on a fence. I will explain it really slowly for all of you opposite: it is a cap. It brings things down.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Through the chair, Attorney-General.

**Mrs D'ATH:** It is a maximum that can be used. There is no cap now. I do not think they get it. There is no cap. They can put up as many signs as they want. They can spend as much money as they want now. The rhetoric is that they are going to spend millions of dollars in single seats and that we will see \$2 million spent in every electorate. There is absolutely no evidence that they can rely on to support their rhetoric in the debate on this bill.

I am very proud to be part of the Palaszczuk Labor government, which from day one has been reforming our electoral laws to bring transparency and integrity. This is another significant step forward. I commend the bill to the House.

