




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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INTEGRITY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

PUBLIC SECTOR BILL

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (3.24 pm): I rise today to speak on the cognate debate on the Integrity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Public Sector Bill. In following the member for Nanango I think it is important to note that today is the day former prime minister Scott Morrison became the first prime minister in Australia's history to be censured by the federal parliament. I find it outrageous that the member for Nanango comes in here and so flippantly refers to the Newman years. They were long, hard, dreadful years where 14,000 public servants—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Member for Southport, member for Kurwongbah and member for Stafford, stop the interchamber conversation.

Ms LAUGA: I find it astounding that the member for Nanango can come in here and speak so flippantly about the Newman years. She said, 'There were the Newman years, sure,' so flippantly it is like she was being asked if she wants caramel in her latte at the Queensland Club or something. 'Sure, it happened.' 'Sure, whatevs.'

The member for Nanango also talked about the health minister and apologies to health workers, which I find astounding as well given that the member for Mudgeeraba still has not apologised to regional healthcare workers after she called them duds and the member for Nanango stood by the member for Mudgeeraba's comments. For many people in this state the Newman years were incredibly dark times. We have heard from members in this place who were personally affected by the Newman government. The member for Nanango sat around the CBRC table and signed off on the sacking of those 14,000 public servants right across the state.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring that the public sector is a fair employer and responsive to the needs of the community and the government. I acknowledge the many hardworking Queensland public servants who live and work in Queensland. I know firsthand the important work they do serving our state, and I know they make a difference to the lives of Queenslanders. I worked for the department of public works back in the day as a town planner. It was after I moved on to a consulting role that Campbell Newman became premier, and many of my friends who still worked in the department were calling me and telling me just how awful going to work was every day. They talked to me about someone they labelled the 'box man'. The 'box man' was someone they had never seen or met before, but the 'box man' walked into offices on George Street each day—they called him the 'box man' because he ultimately carried boxes around—he tapped people on the shoulder, put a box on their desk and said, 'You're out.' They were asked to pack their things and leave then and there on the spot. That is the reality of the Newman years. Many of my colleagues lost their jobs during those years.

I know that in Central Queensland 197 full-time-equivalent positions—doctors, nurses, and healthcare workers—were cut from the Central Queensland Health and Hospital Service. We have had to do a lot of work to undo those years and hire back those important frontline public healthcare staff in Central Queensland. On this side of the House we value our hardworking public servants, unlike those opposite. We all know their opinion of public servants is that they are effectively dispensable.

The Public Service is in my family. I worked in the department, my mum has been a state school teacher for 35 years, my brother and my dad both work in the electricity industry and my partner is a corrective custodial officer. Public Service is in our blood, and I am proud of that fact. It is important that we as a government back our public servants and provide them with the best possible employment laws to ensure fairness and that Queenslanders have the most responsive, consistent and reliable Public Service possible.

For those members opposite, including the member for Broadwater, stage 1 public sector reforms resulted in amendments to the Public Service Act 2008 on 14 September 2020 to ensure the immediate implementation of recommendations relating to, firstly, maximising the government's commitment to employment security, including temporary conversion processes, and providing Public Service employees with access to positive performance management. Stage 2 of the public sector reforms is to replace the Public Service Act 2008 with the Public Sector Bill 2022 to give effect to the primary recommendation to introduce new public sector employment legislation to be drafted in plain language and to be employee focused.

I am extremely proud of a number of the elements of this bill. I will not go into all of the detail of those elements, except to say that the work of public servants right across Queensland is incredibly valued by our government and by me as the local member for Keppel. I commend the bill to the House.