




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNELL

Record of Proceedings, 28 October 2022

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (11.18 am), continuing in reply: When it comes to the sexual harassment provisions, members opposite, including the member for Kawana and the member for Currumbin, either have not read the bill or they do not understand it. That is very concerning from someone who currently holds a shadow IR portfolio and in the previous government was the IR minister and from the member for Currumbin who keeps informing the House that she was a prosecutor before entering the parliament. Before they make these outrageous comments in debate, I plead with them to read the bill and understand the industrial relations legislation.

The member for Kawana stated that all the bill does is include the act's objective in relation to sexual harassment and that there are no punishments. It is simply false. It is absolutely not true. It is unbelievable that a shadow IR minister and an ex prosecutor can state absolute falsehoods. It is breathtaking. The bill includes a suite of amendments to provide industrial protections for workers subject to sexual harassment, sex-based and gender-based harassment. That is all the bill can do. If there are actions that need to go further, that is a QPS matter and a criminal matter. You cannot put that in an Industrial Relations bill. It is outlandish to come in here and claim that, yet they went on and on about it.

Mr Power interjected.

Ms GRACE: I will take that interjection from the member for Logan and I thank him for it. They write these talking points out, they make mistakes and then as they get up they repeat the same errors and the same falsehoods which we have seen so much of in this debate. The changes in the bill empower the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to conciliate, arbitrate and issue injunctive relief to protect victims of sexual, sex- or gender-based harassment. These are nation-leading changes and go beyond the recommendations of the *Respect@work* report which the previous federal LNP government completely ignored. It also ensures that those who perpetrate sexual harassment, sex-based and gender-based harassment are held to account from an industrial perspective. We are talking about workplace laws here, ex prosecutor. It provides that an employer may summarily dismiss an employee that has engaged in such harassment and that a dismissal may be found not to be unfair if the employee engaged in such harassment while at work or otherwise in connection to their employment. Finally—and if those opposite only read the bill—there was a referral to the Anti-Discrimination Act review. The bill ensures that any changes to the definition of sexual harassment under the Anti-Discrimination Act will apply in this IR Act. Before those opposite continue their baseless allegations and falsehoods, I implore them to respect this House and the people that they represent and do them the honour of actually reading the bill and understanding it.

Time and time again those opposite gave misinformation in relation to independent couriers. I wrote to the previous minister and I have written to the current minister. This is a wholly appropriate and constitutionally valid approach to establishing the independent courier jurisdiction in Queensland similar to what already exists in other states. I am not asking for anything more in this bill. We are not asking for anything less than what currently exists in other states like New South Wales, Victoria and WA.

Those opposite have also been banging on about gendered language. This is actually quite distressing to me. There are now many different types of leave that employees can take under birth related leave. It is the leave that is gender non-specific because these days families are deciding who is the main caregiver. They make those decisions. They have a choice. It is interesting that those opposite are all about choice when it suits them but not when it does not suit them. This birth related leave takes into account adoption leave. Unfortunately, at the time I adopted my child 28 years ago I could not take adoption leave, which was very sad. We now have it. It ensures surrogacy leave and cultural adoption leave. It recognises the type of leave and not the person and gives them choice. To make these outlandish statements about women having no rights and we are taking away their identity is an affront to me as a woman and as a female industrial relations minister having to sit here and hear such absolute nonsense. Once again those opposite should be ashamed of themselves.

The member for Kawana asked me to be honest about the reason for this bill and the political motivation for it. I ask the member for Kawana to be honest about the legal affiliations of those that they are so vehemently trying to protect. We have a litany of evidence to suggest links with the LNP. It is interesting that in the 2020 estimates hearing I distinctly recall the member for Kawana raising the theory about spin-offs of the CFMMEU circumventing legislative requirements. He was concerned about the CFMMEUQ and that they may be operating outside the legislation. Is that not interesting? I distinctly recall his concerns. Yet there are no concerns about others operating outside the legislation.

It is interesting that there is no plan, no policy, nothing coming from them should they ever return to government—and, Lord, help me, I hope that I am in an A-frame should it ever happen—about what they will do in relation to these issues. It will be interesting to see how they would feel if union secretaries had a number of organisations that they were heads of. How would the member feel if the CFMMEU, any union that is democratically elected in this state, ran not only the peak council but also a number of other unions? I remember the member for Currumbin going through in detail all of the associations that were run by a handful of people: Independent Workers' Union of Australia; Sworn Officers Professional Association of Australia; the Australian Medical Professionals' Society; the Red Hub; the Nurses Professional Association of Queensland. Imagine if those democratically elected unions in this state were running that many unions registered under the Industrial Relations Act. Those opposite would be crying foul. Those opposite would be going insane. Yet that is exactly what is happening here at the moment and we hear nothing from them.

I remind those opposite that when it came to the federal legislation the government federally never changed any of the rules around unionisation. We have Mr Haycroft, who used to be an LNP member, including the chair of the LNP IR and employment policy, and Mr McGuire, who also holds various positions, such as the treasurer of all of those organisations and then was not able to respond to a question about it. McGuire was a QUT LNP club president and QUT Student Guild president. While holding the position of president he advocated for dismantling student unionism.

The interesting thing about all these organisations is you have a mix of employee organisations and business unions. It is incredible to even suggest what is going on here. He stood up with former LNP MP George Christensen—and the member for Mudgeeraba should hang her head in shame for being a member of this organisation—espousing dangerous misinformation and anti-vaccination messaging. The worst thing they have done is taking all these cases to the commission and not one of them getting up, knowing jurisprudence. Even the commission had to issue decisions saying, more or less, 'I have no idea why you are here; you have no case.' They are taking their money; they charge them fees for representation in addition to their fees. The members opposite were going on about fees. Real unions do not charge additional fees to represent their members—there is one fee.

I might go down to the office of the member for Mermaid Beach to see the QTU members lining up to complain about their union fees. What a lot of rot! On 26 November 2020, the member for Moggill acknowledged Mr Hopkinson-Pearson, the NPAQ secretary, for his contribution to the Moggill LNP campaign. Kara Thomas was the LNP candidate for Pine Rivers in 2020 and the LNP candidate for Bancroft in 2017. David Goodwin, the founder and director of The Business Union, is a twice failed LNP Senate candidate. Do not come in here with rubbish. Do not come in here with false pretences. These are politically motivated. These are to do with the LNP.

Every member on this side of the House is a proud Labor member, born out of the union movement. It has never been a secret that the union movement and Labor were founded with that light on the hill. We are proud. We do not hide behind all of this rubbish, coming in here making accusations and with spider webs of associations. The debate in this House is completely baseless and nonsensical.

I want to thank John Thompson and Linda Lavarch, despite the scathing reports from those opposite. You should be ashamed of yourselves! They are fine upstanding members of our community who have more industrial relations expertise in their little fingers than the whole lot of them put together.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Through the chair.

Ms GRACE: 'The whole lot of them put together', Mr Deputy Speaker. John Thompson has a distinguished career with 20 years in the commission. How dare they come in here and talk disparagingly about those two people. This bill is a sensible bill. It makes sure that registered organisations take primacy. We make no apologies. I commend the bill to the House.