




Speech By
Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 21 June 2022

**PERSONAL INJURIES PROCEEDINGS AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.25 pm): I feel sorry for the Attorney-General that she is forced to come in here yet again and mop up the mess of the industrial relations minister.

Mr Krause: What about the member for Toohey?

Mr BLEIJIE: I take that interjection from the member for Scenic Rim. The attorney is forced to come and mop up the mess of her colleagues who sit around the cabinet table, as accurately set out by the shadow Attorney-General earlier in his contribution. Who could forget Minister Grace Grace whose claim to fame, other than a fake Harvard degree, is—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): The member will use correct titles.

Mr BLEIJIE: Minister Grace has a fake union degree, but she also was an industrial advocate. It was her being that—

Mr Nicholls: She had a full union degree and a fake university degree, I think you mean.

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes, she had a full union degree and a fake university degree, correct. She came into this place. She was the head honcho of the Queensland Council of Unions. She was the industrial advocate. She says in this place that she is the—

Ms FARMER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I seek your ruling on whether the member is straying from the long title of the bill.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I will take the point of order in silence. I am listening carefully to the member's contribution. I will take your point of order into consideration, but at this stage there is no point of order. Before I call the member for Kawana, I would like to remind people that the following members are on a warning: Kawana, Broadwater, Hinchinbrook, Nanango, Currumbin, Toowoomba North, McConnel, Everton, Southern Downs and Buderim.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you for that reminder, Deputy Speaker. I needed that. As I was saying, the Minister for Industrial Relations is a union industrial advocate and she has said in this House on many occasions that she loves being the industrial relations minister. I put it to the House that she spends more time amending legislation that she has not got right than interrogating or having legislation that she actually gets right.

Who could forget the industrial relations great Easter bungle when they declared a public holiday but forgot to actually legislate it in one of the other bills? You have the public holiday legislation and you have the Industrial Relations Act. She did one, but not the other, so she had to come in here to correct it. The member for Clayfield remarked on the 200 racing amendments that she famously put through

the House. She is known for all her amendments. To get these amendments circulated today, to see that they are amending their amendment that they did not get right in the first place, it just beggars belief.

Who is running the show? What are they doing? The incompetence when you have the minister having to correct something that she did herself in 2019 and passed legislation. They were getting rid of legislation that the LNP government had passed. She passed legislation in 2019, said it fixed the issue because, as she said at the time, the Labor Party is the party of the workers. Now they are restricting the workers compensation for the very workers she espoused in 2019. Why? Was it the wrong workers? Were there too many workers? Were the workers taking advantage of her own legislation which now she is restricting?

Mr Nicholls: She did not understand what her own legislation meant.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. She absolutely did not understand what her own legislation meant. When you pass legislation to have no restrictions on capacity for a worker to claim, then it will have an impact on the workers compensation scheme in Queensland. I suspect that is what has happened. After claiming in 2019 that they are the party for the worker—and that is why they are having this, particularly for the workers with terminal illnesses—they are now restricting it and expanding it, all in the one bill. They are restricting what they did in this bill in 2019, but then they are taking it from three to five years.

If honourable members read the bill that the Attorney-General introduced, they will see it has three years. If they read the amendment that has been circulated today, they will see they are expanding it to five years. They cannot even get their amendments right at the time when they are fixing up their mistake from 2019. I do say I feel sorry for the Attorney because it is not the first time she has had to come in here and mop up the mess of her incompetent colleagues around the table. I also know, as the member for Clayfield accurately set out, the Attorney is not so pure in this regard because her own amendments have to clarify some of the mistakes she introduced in this bill as well.

As the shadow Attorney-General said, we are not going to be opposing these provisions of the bill. However, we could not let the opportunity go past without explaining to the House that we are not going to let the Labor government, who claim they are the party for the workers, make that claim any longer. They used that in 2019 for expanding the scope of the legislation and getting rid of those restrictions. Then they worked out they did not get that quite right, so now they have to come in here in 2022 and amend it. They did not quite get the amendment right, so now they have to amend the amendment from their amendment in 2019—#confused, #incompetent. I bet they are. We know it because they spend so much time amending because they rush legislation. They come in here and say, 'Just because the LNP did it, we are going to get rid of it.' Then they get rid of it without having the opportunity to properly look at these things or the unintended consequences of rushing that legislation they introduced in 2019.

I very much look forward to the contribution that the Minister for Industrial Relations will make to this debate when she speaks later and her explanation of how she has had three different positions in a space of 2½ years. She has had four different positions if we take into account the position where she opposed what we did, then amended it, then amended it and now is amending it again today. I look forward to that contribution.

While I am talking about that, we also cannot let the debate go without highlighting the commentary by the industrial relations minister with respect to particular unions in Queensland and the unions that are absolutely supporting workers in the state. That is, of course, the Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland and the Teachers' Professional Association of Queensland. In her contribution today, the industrial relations minister no doubt will talk about that. She never misses the opportunity to belittle those worker movements that are now attracting so many members that they are an absolute force to be reckoned with. I ask members: how is this? If someone joins the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union it costs \$717.50 a year and the actual cost of service is only \$516.66. There is now the Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland, that only charge \$442 a year.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. I am struggling to find the relevance of this part of your contribution to the overall bill. I ask you to come back to the bill.

Mr BLEIJIE: When we talk about workers compensation in the state of Queensland it does have an impact on the workers because the very workers who are subject to the workers compensation scheme are subject to this debate. The point I am making is that workers will be better off investing in a union that puts their interests first, like the NPAQ and the TPAQ, than the traditional unions because they can save a heck of a lot of money. The saving they make from joining these other types of industrial organisations is about \$300. It begs the question: where does the extra money go? We know what the cost of service is for the Nurses and Midwives' Union. Where does the money actually go? Why does the Labor Party—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the question it begs is how this is relevant to the bill. I ask you to come back to the long title of the bill, please.

Mr BLEIJIE: Moving on then, Mr Deputy Speaker—

An honourable member: You chose the wrong Deputy Speaker!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members.

Mr Hart: That is a reflection on the chair!

Mr BLEIJIE: I respect whomever is in the chair. I take the interjection.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members. I do not need the assistance of the House.

Mr BLEIJIE: The bill also deals with another correction and that is with respect to the donation laws that the member for Clayfield talked about earlier. We are on the cusp—in a week and a half—of new donation laws coming in and the government are using the last opportunity to clarify for the ECQ. Can honourable members imagine the ECQ trying to explain to relevant parties involved in the political process in Queensland, particularly political parties, how these new laws apply when the amendments, technical as they may be, or the interpretation of them have not passed the parliament.

Here is the crux of it: this is the equivalent of the modern-day financial gerrymander which is going to kick in on 1 July. First they moved amendments and banned developers from donating to political parties but not the union movement. Then this amendment, coming in on 1 July, says that it caps donations, so an individual who is not a developer—just an individual in our society—who wants to participate in the political process can only donate \$6,000 to a political candidate or \$4,000 to a party not each year but over a term. That is \$6,000 to a political candidate. It is absolutely corruption in this state and it should not be happening.

(Time expired)