




Speech By  
**Joseph Kelly**

**MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES**

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**PUBLIC TRUSTEE (ADVISORY AND MONITORING BOARD) MANAGEMENT BILL**

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (12.01 pm): It is always a pleasure to get the opportunity to speak in a debate and respond to this week's or this bill's standard LNP speech, which we just heard again for about the 15th time and no doubt will hear 30 more times today. I would have thought the member for Gregory could do better than to just read out somebody else's notes!

Let us start by responding to some of what the member for Gregory said. The member talked about the bill not living up to or betraying the spirit of recommendation 30. I thought it was probably important that we read out recommendation 30. I wonder if the member for Gregory read recommendation 30 before he suggested that we betrayed recommendation 30. I suspect not. Recommendation 30 states—

The Queensland government should consider whether the Public Trustee and its clients would benefit from additional oversight and/or reporting mechanisms to improve the Public Trustee's performance, transparency and public accountability.

I fail to see how this bill is betraying the spirit of recommendation 30.

**Mr Nicholls:** Read the whole statement, Joe. That's not the whole recommendation.

**Mr KELLY:** I take that interjection. That is recommendation 30 in its entirety. How can we stand here and honestly, with hand on heart, say that this bill is a betrayal of recommendation 30?

The member also got to his feet and suggested that the minister would not make the reports of the board available, but we have amendments coming into this House whereby a report from the board will be tabled annually into this parliament. I know that these reports are tabled regularly, that all members of this House take that information and use it in ways that they see appropriate, but entirely one of the most accountable measures we can take is to put a report on the table of this parliament and make it available for access not just to the members of this parliament but to all Queenslanders.

In fact, the members for Moggill, Gregory and I am sure some of the others—because it was probably in the standard LNP speaking notes—talked about some sort of amendment coming forward. When I asked for the amendment, it had not been circulated. How many times have I sat in this House listening to the false outrage of those opposite about the failure of amendments to be circulated? I would love to have a look at the amendment. I would love to be debating that amendment at this time, but it has not actually been circulated at this particular time.

**Mr Nicholls:** We table amendments when they are moved, not at any other time.

**Mr KELLY:** I will not take that interjection. It sounds like the member wants to have an argument about parliamentary practice! I am here to debate this very important bill.

We all know and understand the importance of the Public Trustee. I do not think anybody could have watched that ABC program without having some deep misgivings and concerns, but I also want to say that, having witnessed the Public Trustee's work in action on many occasions in many various jobs and roles that I have held over the years, they often also provide absolutely the only support that many people have in this entire world. In that respect, I have seen them do a fantastic job.

**Mr Nicholls:** That's their job.

**Mr KELLY:** Absolutely, it is their job. Like all institutions, like all organisations, at times they fail at their jobs. That is what was revealed in that program. That is why this bill and all of these recommendations are so crucially important.

Starting at the point of this particular board is a really important starting point in relation to these recommendations. I was extremely pleased to see recommendation 2 from the committee. I acknowledge the chair of the committee, all the members of the committee and all those people who took the time to make submissions. I was really pleased when I read the report to see recommendation 2 put forward by the committee. As I said yesterday in relation to another bill in terms of our inquiry into the opportunities to improve the lives of people with mental health in Queensland, the inclusion and involvement of people with lived experience in the mental health field is fundamentally important. It was not something that I had put a lot of thought into prior to that inquiry, but through my involvement in that inquiry I can see how it will and does improve service delivery. I see the potential for that to occur in this particular board structure.

I am also pleased to see that some other equity measures, particularly the First Nations equity issues, have been addressed. Involving somebody who actually has had a lived experience of having to use or utilise the services of the Public Trustee either for themselves or someone very close to them will improve the operations.

Members in this debate have talked about the governance model that has been put forward here. The governance model, as far as I can see, is not designed to be a classic board structure—in fact, there is already one in place—and subsequently we would expect this in an organisation managing financial matters, risk committees et cetera. The proposed board structure is designed to be independent of both government and the Public Trustee, to look into the activities of the Public Trustee, to provide advice, guidance and a spotlight on their activities and to present that to government as well as to the management of the Public Trustee. When all of that occurs, that information will be tabled here in this parliament, on that very table. They are very important accountability measures.

I read all of that report and the recommendations of the Public Advocate. I saw a whole range of suggestions that clearly anticipate much more work to do in this area. As I said, no-one could have watched that program and not been moved by the stories of the people impacted by the Public Trustee. I hope that there will be further movement on these recommendations.

As a government, we have shown ourselves to be very capable and willing to stand up for vulnerable Queenslanders. Through the composition of this board, we are ensuring that people who do not always get a seat at the table get a seat at this table—people with lived experience, First Nations people and people with other equity issues. There are so many programs that we roll out that are aimed at empowering vulnerable Queenslanders. The Skilling Queenslanders for Work program is aimed at empowering vulnerable Queenslanders by getting them into jobs. The social and affordable housing programs that we are rolling out as we speak are aimed at getting people, particularly vulnerable people, into housing. The Fairer Fares program, aimed at bringing down the cost of public transport, is helping vulnerable Queenslanders. The fact that we signed up to all the recommendations contained in the *Not now, not ever* report and rolled those out and that we continue, as announced in this parliament yesterday, to improve our response to domestic violence with the announcement around coercive control shows that this is a government that takes the needs of vulnerable Queenslanders and the desire to empower those Queenslanders very seriously indeed.

This is an important step forward. It is not the only step. It is a step that I think will create greater transparency, greater accountability and greater capacity for every single member of this House to do what they claim they want to do which is to scrutinise the activities of the Public Trustee. I commend the bill to the House.