




Speech By
Steve Minnikin

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

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STATE PENALTIES ENFORCEMENT (MODERNISATION) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (3.25 pm): I rise to make a small contribution to the State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill 2022. Before I get into it, I do wish the member for Woodridge, the member who was known infamously for his ‘debt is a tool’ interview on *Today*, all the very best when we get to consideration in detail because, as part of his greatest hits collection, I do like re-reading *Hansard*. When we last spoke about a monetary bill when it came to his trying unsuccessfully to explain to the House the discount rate, it was amazing because the member for Woodridge likes to always use the little body language moniker of ‘cue the crickets’.

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): The Treasurer will cease his interjections.

Mr MINNIKIN: We ‘cued the crickets’ for probably 15 or 20 minutes, but in consideration in detail the member for Woodridge failed to adequately explain how he actually valued the titles registry at \$7.8 billion.

Mr DICK: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The honourable member is misleading the House. I find the words personally offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Chatsworth, the Treasurer has found those remarks personally offensive. Will you withdraw?

Mr MINNIKIN: I withdraw. It gives me a great deal of pride to speak to this bill. I note that the State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill was introduced by the member for Woodridge in March this year. I also take this opportunity to commend the work of the Economics and Governance Committee. To all of those committee members I say: it was a job well done. However, as already stated, we will be opposing the bill. The committee recommended that the bill be passed, with non-government members lodging a statement of reservation focused on the proposed changes to the Residential Tenancies Authority’s funding model.

To be specific, the bill can be broken down into a couple of key components, the first of which pertains to the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, the SPE Act. Essentially, that is to implement an integrated approach to managing fines for camera detected offences and tolling offences with functions centralised in a single agency, the Queensland Revenue Office. I note that it also provides a framework for the earlier registration of unpaid infringement notices with SPER, the State Penalties Enforcement Registry, and, finally, makes miscellaneous amendments to modernise the operation of the SPE Act and support the effective administration of SPER.

The second key component of the bill before the House this afternoon pertains to the TO(RUM) Act, the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995. I note that the integrated approach to fines management will seek to eliminate unnecessary duplication of services across government; to improve operational efficiencies and provide a central point of contact within government for persons served with fines for camera detected offences and tolling offences; and to enhance the overall effectiveness of SPER’s activities.

Thirdly, I also note from my reading of the green and white papers that the bill amends the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act, the RTRA Act, to provide stable funding for the RTA and ensure security of rental bonds on behalf of Queensland tenants. As members in the House would know, the RTA is currently funded by returns on the investment of rental bond moneys through QIC. Under the proposed legislation, such returns would be earned by the state and would go into the Consolidated Fund. The RTA will then be funded by a grant from the Consolidated Fund, as is the case for other statutory authorities. I note that the bill also makes minor amendments to various tax acts to address anomalies for trustees of special disability trusts and confidentiality provisions.

We have heard from members on this side of the chamber that whenever we consider bills before the House we always look with interest at stakeholder views and the level of consultation of this government. This government prides itself on being open, accountable and transparent and engaging in fair dinkum stakeholder involvement—not basically wrapping up the present and saying, ‘We hold the gift before you.’

Here is how it went with this particular bill. There were seven submissions to the committee’s inquiry. All the submitters tended to concentrate on the SPER amendments and they were favourably disposed to the bill. For example, LawRight observed that the bill was procedural in nature and, unsurprisingly, encouraged SPER to use its discretion as an authorised authority to withdraw infringement notices after considering an individual’s circumstances. The LGAQ, the Local Government Association of Queensland, offered a number of enhancements to the bill in relation to updating the fines online web portal service and regular and quarterly engagement with issuing authorities. I am not sure how far that particular view went. It has already been mentioned by colleagues on this side of the chamber that the Moreton Bay Regional Council supported the bill but requested that further consideration be given to the mechanism by which it secured collective feedback delivered to SPER.

The seven submissions were wide and varied. Submissions regarding the proposed changes to the RTRA Act were lodged by Tenants Queensland and the Real Estate Institute of Queensland. Both submissions were strongly opposed to the RTRA Act amendments. Tenants Queensland criticised the lack of consultation. We on this side of the House have heard that time and time again when it comes to bills brought before the chamber. This bill is absolutely no exception. Tenants Queensland asserted that the changes will remove the autonomy of the industry regulator and destroy a self-funded model that has stood the test of time.

Moreover, the REIQ noted that they were ‘deeply concerned’ with the proposed amendments and that the ‘brief summary provided in explanatory notes does not, in their view, have any basis for the proposed material amendments’. They further went on to add that they were ‘disappointed by the absence of any stakeholder consultation prior to the bill and the insertion of such a fundamental change in a nondescript omnibus bill’. It is for these reasons and others that have been articulated by members on this side of the chamber that the opposition will be opposing the bill.

In relation to SPER, this seems to be something that the Labor Party has failed to come to grips with year after year. We can go back to the record debt blowouts under the one and only former member for South Brisbane. She abandoned an IT project—again costing the taxpayers of Queensland fists full of dollars. It was all too hard. I believe it was the member for Jordan who asked: what was the LNP’s response? She said it was to get private debt collectors involved. I would like to persevere with that train of thought for a moment. When we came to power in 2012 this was a high priority—maybe not the highest—given that this was ratcheting out of control. It was absolutely—

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr MINNIKIN: The member for Woodridge might like to listen to someone who can articulate the fundamental accounting equation. The member for Woodridge has failed to do that time after time. He is absolutely clueless, hopeless and an abject failure. It is quite interesting to note that we more often than not hear the contribution of the member for Jordan after the Treasurer has spoken. I have to tell members that I try to mark pretty fairly. It is not just the way the member for Jordan delivers her contributions, but it is the substance by way of comparison to the Treasurer, the member for Woodridge—

Mr FURNER: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, on relevance. The member has strayed way off the topic of this bill and is waxing lyrical with nonsense in this chamber. I ask you to make him come back to the substance of the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): You have made your point. Take a seat, Minister. Member for Chatsworth, I invite you to return to the long title of the bill.

Mr MINNIKIN: I will return to the long title bill of the bill. As the members of the Labor Party like to do, this is a compare and contrast. Under the LNP treasurer, the member for Clayfield, using private debt collectors we collected unpaid millions. If we compare that to now, it has blown out to over

\$1.2 billion. It has been clawed back somewhat—that is true—but the trouble is this. With the new mobile phone detection system, including the detection of people not wearing seatbelts—which we have made very clear we absolutely support; there are no two ways about that—it is going to mean, as the Treasury books will already be showing, an increase in SPER debts over time. Heaven help the taxpayers of Queensland retrieving that.