



Speech By  
**Steve Minnikin**

**MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH**

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### **INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (6.15 pm): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise this evening and talk about the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I guess it is fair to say that often we are in the general community and people come up to us and say, 'It does not really matter—ALP or LNP—what party you belong to; you are all "the same"'. Most of the bills that come in here—probably 75 per cent because of the nature of state government being fundamentally a service-based level and tier of government—are approved and go through on the voices. Well, not this one. This is one where, when we read members' contributions in *Hansard* and we hear them firsthand on the floor of parliament, we understand the DNA of where members' ideological views have been formed.

In many cases one only has to go back to inaugural speeches. I make it a point of habit: for every new ALP member who comes into the chamber I try wherever practicable to give them the courtesy of listening firsthand to their maiden speech. If I have not, I will then get the *Hansard* inaugural speech. Because it absolutely is telling—

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr MINNIKIN:** I will not take an interjection because that is not true, but I will say this: I absolutely know that, when members of the ALP get up not only are they absolutely sincere, heart to head thanking their union, they know that their very political survival depends on it. That is not a bad thing in so far as my first experience with the union was when I was 16 back at the Chandler Police Station. I was there working as a casual labourer. It was the first pay week after the Friday afternoon three o'clock bell would ring. I received my first ever cash pay packet back in the day. Then I had someone with a very strong Scottish accent come up to me, which I will not attempt to impersonate, who effectively said, 'I am taking 10 per cent.' I said in my probably high-pitched voice, 'What for?' 'That is the price for you being a union member.' I said, 'What will I get in return?' He said, 'That is what you pay to be a union member.'

My very first iteration with the union probably was my own family. My two uncles, as Grace Grace the member for McConnel will attest, were shop stewards, one of them with her old union. Still to this day one of them will walk over hot coals to try to see my political demise, and good for him. I absolutely will always while I have breath stand up for the right of people to absolutely join a union of their choice, but there is the choice between collectivism and a word that means everything to my ideology—choice, which I will come back to very shortly.

The simple fact of the matter is: you start off with an industrial relations debate on a fifty-fifty proposition. What have we seen and will see with the passage of this bill? That fifty-fifty proposition will be tilted on its axis. The simple fact of the matter is we have some unions that have absolutely done for many years the right thing by their members, but you know what? At the end of the day I fundamentally believe that that collectivism is trumped by choice. I will use the example dear to my heart. I have someone very close to me in the independent teachers community who absolutely must have public indemnity insurance. This applies to nurses, teachers and other professions as well.

At the end of the day, not all but many do not want to be in any way, shape or form attributed to the ALP—washed through the Trades and Labour Council. They want nothing to do with it. What do they want to do? They want to be able to exercise their right. We have had examples of saving \$400—it may be less, it may be more. The thing that I will bang on about is the fact that people should have that choice.

The member for Lockyer said in his contribution a bit earlier that it is a bit sad that when we go through the explanatory notes of the bill there are some provisions in relation to sexual harassment that are absolutely spot on—bingo!—and we could not agree with them more, but unfortunately they are part of the in globo package of this legislation and, therefore, sadly cannot be supported in isolation. They have to be looked at collectively with the other provisions of the bill.

Members can bang on about 120 years ago and the extreme situation where there were 10-year-olds working in Welsh coalmines who were taken out of poverty, but then we can wind the clock forward to what we see in modern society. We have some unions that should absolutely—and members opposite who are associated with them; the CFMMEU is one that comes to mind—hang their heads in shame.

On my own dime, my own coin, I flew to South Australia to help with the election back in March this year. Malinauskas won and it broke my heart, but guess what? I will give that Premier credit for one thing. He handed back circa \$125,000 in donations from the CFMEU. He handed it back. That is called leadership. There is a vacuum of leadership in this state when the Premier of this great state will not do the same with the \$90,000 taken from the CFMEU.

This is a union that only a matter of weeks ago protested at 1 William Street targeting a senior bureaucrat. Coincidentally, the minister was gone. He was not around. What was the deal that was brokered according to whistleblowers to me? From that 1 William Street incident—an incursion with the CFMEU storming the basement or at least outside—they were then entitled to have either two, or it might have been three, delegates attend a QTRIP forum a matter of weeks later. We all know what happened from the media reports. I have done media with the member for Kawana on this. It was absolutely disgusting.

If we want to talk about unions, let us keep some degree of balance. There are unions that some of the members opposite should be proud to be associated with, but let us call this for what it is worth. There are unions that are truly beyond contempt. The reality of the matter is this. If we want to be fair dinkum about industrial relations in this state we have to get back to a semblance of common sense and call it out for what it is. This is nothing short of a financial gerrymander—where we have a union that can absolutely not always represent the best interests of their members.

What is this about? Let us cut to the other 'c' word. I have talked about collectivism. I have talked about choice. Let us get to the nub of this. It is cash. The simple reality is this. It was said in this chamber two weeks ago when we last sat—and I will reiterate it—that for the next two years all of us on this side of chamber in the LNP will go out and raise money. We will have our fundraisers. We will do what it takes to get money that has now been crippled and capped—our \$1,000 limits. We will work within the gamut of the law. That is what we will do. We will go out and raise money. Do members know why we raise the money? Because this is a House where battles take place, unfortunately rarely, but this is a great bill.

This is where there is a line in the sand between the LNP and the ALP. Industrial relations is pretty much the tip of the spear. The simple fact of the matter is that the union movement at times can cause the taxpayer of Queensland, what I call, the overall harm principle. Here is an example—and I am not going to table this because I am aware that we have millions of tabled documents—that I will refer to directly. I have here a list of TMR projects where BPIC principles apply.

BPIC is the darling of the CFMEU. What is the importance of this? The member for Miller, whom I shadow—option A was on the email—takes riding instruction from that union. Members might say, 'Big deal!' Here is the rub. It is costing the taxpayers of Queensland \$4 billion. If we apply an indices of 20 per cent on top of the projects listed in question on notice No. 259—if we multiple those projected budget costs by 20 per cent and not the purported 28 per cent that we are hearing from industry—the project budgeted \$21.079 billion of capital expenditure will have another \$4.216 billion added to it.

In my remaining 14 seconds, I will talk about Cross River Rail. It is not awesome. It is over budget by billions of dollars and it will keep rising because of undue union influence.