



Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

Record of Proceedings, 14 March 2025

TRUSTS BILL



Hon. MAJ SCANLON (Gaven—ALP) (7.55 pm): I rise to address the Trusts Bill 2025 and in so doing acknowledge the time the parliament has spent considering the previous iteration of this bill, introduced by the former Labor government—the lapsed Trusts Bill 2024. The Attorney-General has already gone to great lengths to detail the extensive history of this bill as well as its objectives. I have no intention of repeating what the Attorney-General has already said in her introductory speech, nor do I intend to recycle elements of the former attorney-general's introductory speech. I understand why the Attorney-General did that as this bill is technical in nature and it is important to get it right.

I acknowledge that the legislation before us today has had a long gestation period. What has resulted is modernised legislation that will be responsive to the needs of trustees, trust beneficiaries and trust practitioners alike. This bill was introduced by the former Labor attorney-general and then lapsed, and the bill has now been reintroduced by the current Attorney-General. I appreciate that this has taken time, but I also want to take this opportunity to thank all of the stakeholders, the submitters, the department, the former attorneys-general and, in particular, the member for Waterford and the former member for Redcliffe for their contribution to the previous iteration of this bill.

The opposition has no intention of standing in the way of sensible legislation. We support the intention of this bill and support these changes being effected. We will not impede progress of legislation for partisan gain. In introducing a bill so closely resembling the bill introduced by the former Labor government last year, it is clear the Attorney-General shares the same confidence in the quality of our work. We will be a productive opposition because our duty to Queenslanders is to make the most of the time we have in this House. However, it would be remiss of me not to discuss the urgency motion that was moved in relation to this bill. This bill is another clear example of the Crisafulli government's failure to plan.

Mrs Frecklington: But you just said you agree with everything.

Ms SCANLON: While the opposition supports this bill, we have strong concerns about this government's continued reliance on urgency motions to fill the *Notice Paper* because they did not introduce enough legislation last year.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kempton): Attorney-General, you have had your go.

Ms SCANLON: While the lapsed bill was consulted on extensively at multiple stages in its development, two stakeholders made submissions to this bill with concerns about the government circumventing this House's consultative process. With written submissions open for only three business days following the bill's introduction, the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners Queensland branch said—

... the time-frame for making submissions is so short as to be illusory.

and expressed their disappointment—

... that such an important piece of legislation is being treated in this way.

In her introductory remarks, the Attorney-General attempted to justify the use of an urgency motion by saying that trusts lawyers had been waiting for this bill to pass. In direct contrast to the Attorney-General's remarks, the Queensland Law Society's submission stated—

Although it is arguable that modernisation of trusts law in Queensland has long been overdue, this is not an adequate reason to declare the Bill urgent and truncate the public consultation period.

The QLS submission continued—

A fundamental tenet of our system of parliamentary democracy is that stakeholders have a meaningful opportunity to be involved in the consultation process. We do not consider short consultations such as this one amount to meaningful and robust consultation with stakeholders.

Both submissions acknowledge the bill was modelled on the lapsed bill. However, they still concluded that the provided consultation period was inadequate for their volunteer members to review changes between the two bills in detail.

This bill represents, as I said, a positive step forward for trusts laws in Queensland, modernising the legislation and addressing existing gaps in the act, but this bill also represents the arrogance of a new government with a clear and intentional lack of legislative agenda. As previously outlined, this bill has predominantly been developed by Labor through consultation on the previous iteration of the bill. For this reason, the opposition does not see any reason there should be unnecessary time dedicated to debating a piece of legislation that we have all said we agree with—a bill that has unanimous endorsement across the parliament. As such, on behalf of the opposition, we support and will vote to pass it tonight as there is bipartisan support. I move—

That the question be now put.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kempton): Attorney, could I please ask for quiet as I am getting advice on this issue.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not find that the debate has been sufficiently progressed and therefore call the member for Nicklin.