




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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ADJOURNMENT

Federal Election, Working From Home

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (9.06 pm): Last month, like all electorate offices in South-East Queensland, the Waterford electorate office was forced to close due to the Cyclone Alfred weather event. Of course, other than during COVID, in my decade as the member for Waterford this was one of the only times that I have received an order to close the doors of the electorate office. However, my team and I knew we had a big job ahead of us in helping the community wherever possible. Whilst I was on the ground, my team were working safely from home. What a great thing working from home is. I know that, particularly for women with caring responsibilities, having flexible working conditions helps them return to and, more importantly, helps them stay in the workforce.

Recently, the Commonwealth public sector union conducted a survey of 5,000 women from across the Public Service. Some 96.7 per cent said that flexible work arrangements were important or very important, 65.7 per cent said they regularly accessed working from home and 68.2 per cent of respondents said that they had caring responsibilities for either children or elderly parents. With women making up 57 per cent of the public sector workforce, Peter Dutton's plan to remove work from home options for public servants will worsen the gender pay gap and send women backwards. Women's working conditions are on Peter Dutton's hit list as he will be forcing public servants to come back to work—that is, if there are any public servants left.

We know of Peter Dutton's plan to cut from the Public Service, including 12,000 jobs of hardworking federal public servants who work right here in Queensland. That means public servants ripped away from our federal health, education and even veterans departments. Will he cut jobs from disaster response agencies? Will he take the jobs of the 15 public servants who were operating out of a caravan in Hervey Bay to provide essential support while the community was inundated with flooding last month?

Providing support to flood-affected residents might not be something that Peter Dutton knows too much about, since as the cyclone was incoming he was heading to Sydney to a fundraiser held in a mansion in Vaucluse. While the Prime Minister was on his way to help, Peter Dutton was flying to Sydney. Maybe that is why Peter Dutton has announced that if he wins the election he will work from his harbourside home of Kirribilli. Can you believe the hubris of Peter Dutton, who is already measuring the curtains at Kirribilli? I wonder if he will change his mind about people working from home given that he will be working from home in Sydney.

The upcoming federal election gives the women of this country an opportunity to move forward and not have our hard-fought-for rights wound back. Peter Dutton has made it known that he does not stand for women. He never has.