

Legislative Council

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STATUTES AMENDMENT (MEMBERS' BENEFITS) BILL

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (12:00): I just want to state the reason that I supported the adjournment motion of the Hon. Mark Parnell. Number one, I am not opposed to this package at all, and I truly do not think it goes far enough. I agree and concur with everything that the Hon. Rob Lucas said in his speech. It is, though, the process that we are using here that I find objectionable; that this is being rushed through at a quarter to midnight pace. I would just like to very briefly—because I am not going to rave on—recap about when I was just an average citizen out there and heard about the pollies' car deal. There was no yap about it in the media until that was done.

You know, I do not think people actually give a toss about whether we get a pay rise, or whether we get a rise in our super to bring us equal to senior public servants, or even councillors, mayors, people who work in local council for that matter or chief executives. I think it is the process that we use, and the more that we sneak around and the more that we try and rush this stuff through to try not to have media scrutiny about it, then the more suspicious people get of what our benefits are. For example, nobody out there knows that there is no pension scheme any more. That did not get any media. You talk to anybody out there and they say 'You're all right; you'll retire on a pension.' When you say 'No, sorry; there is no pension any more', they just do not know.

I think that we should take the right process with this, as we do with other legislation: have it introduced, debate it, and have it voted on in two weeks or whatever. While people in the media out there are blabbing on the way that they will about pollies' perks and all the rest of it, we should actually take the time to defend the increase in superannuation and talk about the loss of benefits that have already been incurred by members of parliament and the fact that we do not have the security of tenure, that more than likely some of us in 2014 may walk away from here with not even so much as a percentage of long service.

I know when I came into this place I walked away from long service to take up this position and missed out on quite a neat little sum of money that would have come in handy to pay off our home or whatever. That is me personally. There are some people who do give up good wages, good salaries, to come in here—I know the Hon. Dennis Hood is one of those—to do a job, and it is a kick in the teeth every time you hear the media out there talking about how we are looking after ourselves and doing whatever not to have that opportunity for that two-week period when there will be a campaign—we know there will—to defend ourselves. Then, you know what: if we do not actually think we are worth it, then we are not, and the way that we are handling this makes people believe that we do not think we are worth it.

So we have had the federal election, where there was fifty-fifty support for the major parties; we have had the state election swing away from the government. Maybe we should just look at how we do things in here and meet public expectation, be open to the scrutiny of this, have an opportunity to respond to it, and be open and honest about the benefits that we do and do not get any more. Maybe, if we did that, all this angst would be gone and perhaps there would not be an opportunity then for populist politicians to go out there and continually criticise members of parliament for doing what I believe to be an honest day's work for an honest day's pay.