

I have heard some people were not happy with the idea that members of parliament would have to submit quarterly reports explaining how they spent their electorate allowance. I do not have a problem with that. As long as that continues in the changes the government is bringing forward, then perhaps the new tribunal will maintain that status quo. Even though it creates a bit more paperwork, it does at least tell the public where we spend our money and make sure we spend it for the right reasons. Obviously there is a fair bit of latitude with an electorate allowance, but as long as you have a good explanation for what it was used for – I do not think anyone would say that was not a reasonable request from the tribunal.

My understanding of having a tribunal – or I might say a tri-tribunal because ‘tri’ can be three but can also simply mean one person – is the tribunal will now be of three people. That is a good idea ...

Mr Giles: It already is.

Mr WOOD: Yes. My understanding is the three people are very knowledgeable people who have worked in the public service and the community and will have a good understanding of the issues they have to deal with.

I am interested to know if there are other issues that concerned the government. The government initiated this disallowance motion yesterday. My feeling is this is more due to the principle under the existing act where the government, more or less, has a say in what the remuneration for members of parliament would be. The government is saying that should not be the case; that we should have an independent body, a tribunal, which determines that so government is at arm’s length from making those decisions.

We have seen what happened in Queensland when the Newman government first came in. I do not think it had a tribunal; it just decided it would set salaries on the basis of a percentage smaller than the federal government members were receiving. Of course, there was a huge uproar from the public because of the huge increases in salaries.

We also have to be aware that by having a tribunal – my understanding is Queensland did not have it at that stage – it gives you that arm’s length. I also understand the Queensland government then set up a tribunal which made the determination for what the salaries should be, and they were a lot less than what was originally determined.

What salaries members of parliament receive is always a very sensitive issue. In having this tribunal with three local people who have been involved in the public service, the private sector

and the community in many other ways, you are likely to get a determination which reflects not only whether members of parliament are entitled to an increase, but also what the public thinks of us as well.

People would say we deserve it if we do our job properly, but the way we look at the moment I doubt anybody would want to give us a pay rise.

Madam Speaker, I support the concept that the tribunal will look independently at these things. However, I am interested if there are any other concerns the government had about the proposed Determination No 1 of 2014 which it felt needed to be looked at again by the new tribunal.

Mr ELFERINK (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, it has all been said.

I thank honourable members for their contributions. The issue articulated by the member for Nelson about the importance of arm’s length being the driving force behind this was also articulated by government and opposition members in this House yesterday. Further work will be done on this in the not-so-distant future.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION
Establishment of a Select Committee
on the Port of Darwin

Mr GILES (Economic Development and Major Projects): Madam Speaker, I move that:

1. a Select Committee on the Port of Darwin be appointed
2. the committee shall inquire into and report on the Port of Darwin lease model proposed in the Port of Darwin Bill 2014 (Serial 111) and recommend options to enhance the model to ensure that the chosen partner:
 - (a) has a vision for growth and development of the port which is aligned to that of the NT government
 - (b) is required to charge realistic and competitive pricing that promotes business and economic development
 - (c) has work practices and processes which represent international best practice in the areas of safety, environmental and operational efficiency
3. in consideration of these matters, the committee should: