

I would like to point out to the Member for Araluen that there is not a lack of business in parliament this week. We simply cannot change legislation for the sake of it. In fact, if we had not sent the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Bill to a scrutiny committee, we would be debating that this week. We are providing more scrutiny and more transparency to our legislation.

There are three other pieces of legislation. At least two times—I can recollect—under the CLP, we came for two weeks of parliament and did not have any legislation. I think it was August 2013 and September 2016—I might have the months muddled up with the years, but twice we came in for two weeks and did not have any legislation.

We have three pieces of legislation and an early childhood statement that is a draft plan for generational change. I challenge those opposite to pick it up, read it and provide some input through the debate that will continue this morning. Let us know what you think of it. Are we on the right track? Do you have suggestions?

I dismiss the comments from those opposite on lack of business in this parliament.

The final point I want to make is that the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition were torn this week between being in this Chamber or in Indonesia on a very important trade delegation. The first tripartisan—government, opposition and Independent. I would have thought the Member for Araluen would have been proud of that and might talk about it next week when you go to Canada on your CPA tour. That is what I have heard.

I think it is a bit rich—I let it go yesterday, but I called it out today. We generally have discretion as members of parliament. We acknowledge that our Chief Minister, Leader of the Opposition and an Independent member who has very strong connections with Indonesia ...

Mrs Lambley: I am not the Chief Minister.

Ms FYLES: But you are going on a trip next week and missing parliament. Point made, thank you.

Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I commend the motion to the House.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Note Statement – Early Childhood Development Plan

Continued from 10 October 2017.

Mr VOWLES (Primary Industry and Resources): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I support my colleague, the Minister for Children, Hon Nicole Manison, or Mano, as we like to call her in the lobby.

This is an important statement as this government is committed to children. They are at the core of our election promises and in opposition it was a priority of ours that, if we got in to government, we planned to tell Territorians about it. Once elected we started working on that plan immediately.

We need to make some changes, and we are. We need to make sure we develop a sound, evidence-based policy, listen to Territorians and demonstrate that as a government we are committed to long-term reform that ensures the best possible opportunities for Territory children to reach their full potential.

Crucial to working towards facilitating the best possible opportunities for Territory children is supporting parents, families and carers in their endeavours to raise their children. I include carers in that because as we know, in many cultures, including Aboriginal culture, parenthood and raising children is a shared responsibility of the extended family. Raising children well—and I emphasise ‘well’—is a mammoth task, and not all parents, families and carers cope equally. It is essential that support is on offer to all who have the responsibility of raising children so they can facilitate a happy and healthy environment for the benefit of all children.

A long-term commitment to children and early childhood was the centrepiece of Labor’s vision and commitment that we took to the election last year. This Labor government is about honouring its commitments to Territorians as we work to restore the trust that is dearly needed in governments.