

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE — CIVIL LITIGATION — STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS LEGISLATION

**548. Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS to the Attorney General:**

I refer to comments of the Premier regarding legislation to remove the statute of limitations for victims of child sexual abuse to seek compensation. The Premier said that every day there is a delay, there is justice denied. Is the Attorney General's failure to introduce this important legislation due to his inability to win the support of his party colleagues, and which of his party colleagues are denying justice to victims of child sexual abuse?

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** You did! You voted against it.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister for Mines and Petroleum, your own member is on his feet. I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY replied:**

I thank the member for the question. It is the government's policy to lift the statute of limitations insofar as it applies to victims of child sexual abuse and, as the Premier also stated, to include in that legislation the identification of the correct defendant, so that schools will not be able to hide behind religious trusts. We agree that there is a delay, but that delay is occasioned by this: the government having taken that decision, there is a hold-up with the Parliamentary Counsel's Office. The hold-up with the Parliamentary Counsel's Office is because the previous government introduced a workforce replacement policy that required that a public servant who left could be replaced only by somebody earning 60 per cent of that person's wage. The Parliamentary Counsel's Office was denuded of parliamentary draftspeople. This government faced a crisis when we came into office because there were not enough draftspeople.

**Mr P.A. Katsambanis:** The dog ate my homework!

**The SPEAKER:** The dog might have eaten your homework, member for Hillarys, but I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** We have flown in from interstate—we have recruited from interstate —

**Dr M.D. Nahan:** What about local jobs?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** We have flown in from interstate, retired draftspeople. What about local jobs, he says. The previous government denuded the Parliamentary Counsel's Office, and we are advised that it takes five years to train up a lawyer to be a parliamentary draughtsperson. We did not have the draftspeople there.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey** interjected.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** The member for Scarborough knows that we did not, because her elder sister works there and would fully inform her of this.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** She is not my elder sister.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** The member knows who I am talking about. She will fully inform the member of this—we have not had the personnel —

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** The Attorney General has implied that I have a relative in the office who is discussing confidential business of the government with me, and it is incorrect, and he should correct the record. It is completely false.

**The SPEAKER:** Member, if what you said is incorrect, can you withdraw it?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** I withdraw it, if it is incorrect. I only gave my understanding, but I withdraw it.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** In any event, I do not know about that relationship, but members opposite know what they did to the Parliamentary Counsel's Office.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Scarborough, I asked him to withdraw it, and it has been withdrawn, so just let it rest.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Members opposite know full well what they did. They decimated the Parliamentary Counsel's Office, which has held up the legislative program of the incoming government. We have had to fly in from interstate experienced retired draftspeople, and as soon as this bill is drafted, it will be presented to Parliament. Let me repeat: the government's decision is to lift the statute of limitations, which at the moment prohibits and bars the victims of child sexual abuse from bringing suits after the expiration of three years since the act was committed. That will be lifted, and the provisions for the correct identification of the defendant will also

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Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr John Quigley; Mrs Liza Harvey

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be in that bill, and it will be before Parliament as soon as the Parliamentary Counsel's Office presents it to the government.