

~~In addition, a new section is included in the Bill which states that the Auditor General must not engage in any paid employment outside of the duties of the office. Contravention of this provision is considered to be misconduct and could result in the suspension and/or removal of the Auditor General from office.~~

~~The Bill will retain the requirement for the Auditor General to be appointed for a maximum of seven years, but will provide for the reappointment of the Auditor General for a consecutive term so long as the sum of the terms does not exceed seven years.~~

~~This new provision will bring the Auditor General into line with other independent statutory office holders in Queensland, such as the Ombudsman, the Information Commissioner and Commissioners of the Crime and Misconduct Commission.~~

~~Audit reporting provisions which were not previously contained in Parts 5 or 6 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 have also been included in the Bill, such as the audit of public sector entities, expenses of ministerial offices and whole of government financial statements.~~

~~The Bill will include the audit functions currently contained in the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993 as they relate to Government Owned Corporations and their subsidiaries.~~

~~Provisions relating to the timing of a strategic review of the Queensland Audit Office have also been reviewed during drafting of the Bill.~~

~~This was in response to concerns raised by both the former Public Accounts Committee and the Auditor General that the current legislation is unclear in instances where the Committee does not make any formal recommendations in relation to a strategic review report, but the Premier tables a response to the Committee's report.~~

~~To clarify this point, the Bill provides for a strategic review to commence from one date, being five years from when the Premier tables a response to the Public Accounts Committee report on the last strategic review.~~

~~This approach will ensure that the Auditor General is able to implement the strategic review recommendations in full knowledge of the views of both the Public Accounts Committee and the Premier.~~

~~Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.~~

~~Debate, on motion of Mr Langbroek, adjourned.~~

TELECOMMUNICATIONS INTERCEPTION BILL

First Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.32 pm): I present a bill for an act to enhance law enforcement in Queensland by enabling the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Misconduct Commission to be declared agencies under the Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979 (Cwlth). I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Tabled paper: Telecommunications Interception Bill.

Tabled paper: Telecommunications Interception Bill, explanatory notes.

Second Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.32 pm): I move—
That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Telecommunications Interception Bill 2009. This bill delivers on my government's commitment to ensure that our law enforcement agencies have the powers they need to fight crime. At the same time, the bill provides the high standard of checks and balances to the powers that the public expects and deserves.

This bill will enable the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Misconduct Commission to apply for telecommunications interception warrants for the investigation of serious offences. Telecommunications interception is a highly effective tool for detecting and prosecuting serious criminal activity, particularly drug trafficking, organised crime, predatory paedophilia networks, corruption and premeditated violent crimes. With the recent bkie gang related violence we have seen in other states, these powers will be another weapon in our arsenal to ensure that we do not see the same kinds of problems here in Queensland.

These powers will complement the new laws targeting organised crime gangs which I have already announced. Telecommunications interception can be a key source of information for directing the focus of complex operations. It can also free up the time that law enforcement officers might otherwise spend on physical and technical surveillance or undercover work. It can reduce threats to the safety of those officers.

The evidence that it produces can be very compelling, but it is also an investigative tool that is highly intrusive on the privacy rights of individual citizens. Applications for telephone interception warrants are made without the knowledge of the targeted person or the people with whom they are likely to communicate. Given this intrusiveness, the bill provides the further safeguard—unique to any state

telecommunications interception legislation in Australia—of the involvement of the Public Interest Monitor, or PIM, in Queensland applications for interception warrants, to test the validity of those applications.

The Queensland government lobbied the former Howard government for five years for the inclusion of this safeguard in the warrant application process for Queensland telecommunications interception powers. I was very pleased that in August 2008 Prime Minister Rudd wrote to me advising that his government had agreed to amend its act to allow Queensland law enforcement agencies to apply for interception warrants and that it would do so in a manner that provided for the comprehensive involvement of the Public Interest Monitor in the warrant application process. I take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister for acting so swiftly on Queensland's request.

This is really the reintroduction of this bill, as it had been introduced in the last session of the previous parliament but since has been dissolved for the election. The reintroduction of the bill meets a commitment I gave to reintroduce and pass this legislation as a matter of priority. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Langbroek, adjourned.

~~ADDRESS IN REPLY~~

~~**Mr SPEAKER:** Before calling the honourable member for Townsville, I remind the House that this is the member's first speech in this place. Accordingly, I would ask you all to extend the courtesies of the House to her on this, her first speech.~~

~~**Ms JOHNSTONE** (Townsville—ALP) (2.36 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—~~

~~That the following address be presented to the Governor in reply to the speech delivered by Her Excellency in opening this, the 53rd Parliament of Queensland—~~

~~"We the members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland wish to assure Your Excellency of our continued respect for the Crown and loyalty to the system of government in this state and to tender our thanks for the speech with which you opened the first session.~~

~~The various measures to which Your Excellency referred and to all other matters that may be brought before us will receive our careful consideration and we shall strive to deal with them so that our endeavours may contribute to the advancement and the prosperity of the people of this state."~~

~~I am honoured and privileged to be here in the chamber delivering my address in reply to the 53rd sitting of the Queensland parliament as the first woman elected as the member for Townsville. To be doing so as part of this parliament led by Premier Anna Bligh, the first Australian woman to be elected to her position in her own right, is a truly historic time. I could not be more proud to be a Queenslander than I am today.~~

~~I start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which parliament meets. I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the land which makes up the Townsville electorate, the Wulgurukaba and the Bindal peoples of Townsville and Magnetic Island, and the Manbarra people of Palm Island. I also acknowledge the historical owners of Palm Island, the Bwgcolman people.~~

~~As the member for Townsville, my first responsibility is to you, the people of Townsville. This responsibility is to represent you here in the parliament and to be held accountable by you for decisions and actions that I take on your behalf. Indeed, it was at the historical 2002 Townsville sitting of parliament that the then Premier, Peter Beattie, reminded parliamentarians of this critical point. I believe one of the most important functions of government is to provide the infrastructure, services and amenities that create safe, inclusive and progressive communities. If provided, this then allows individuals and families to safely go about their everyday lives within the context of a rich and dynamic democracy that they can take ownership of and be a part of.~~

~~Family is, of course, at the core of who we are. Indeed, having a strong supportive family is what has allowed me to undertake the journey that has led me to this most respected chamber today. To my husband, Carl, I say: you are my rock. As my staunchest supporter you have never doubted for one minute my decision to take my work in the community to the next level by pursuing a career in politics. Sharing, as I do, your passion for a socially just society and fair employment conditions for working Australians, I hope that I will do you proud.~~

~~To Ethan and Paige, our children: your smiles and cuddles always arrive at just the right time. I know that you will grow up in a household where there are no limitations on what great things you can achieve in your lives. Dad and I are so proud to have you as our children. I will remember sharing this day with you forever.~~

~~Hard work will be at the core of me achieving my priorities in this term of government. The people of Townsville can be assured that I have a huge capacity for hard work. This comes from my parents, Terry and Val Thompson, who are here in the gallery today. Dad is a carpenter by trade and a self-employed builder by profession. Mum has dedicated her life to working in the home, raising four children and working in partnership with dad in their business. I know how hard some of those early years were~~