

Gail Easton

From: Anna Dick
Sent: Monday, 14 November 2011 9:18 AM
To: Legal Affairs Police Corrective Services and Emerg Svc Committee
Subject: Submission: Right to Information (Government related Entities) Amendment Bill 2011

Dear Committee Members.

I am writing to alert you to my support of the proposed amendment to RTI legislation as proposed in the Private Members Bill tabled by Mr Jarrod Bleijie.

I am a member of the Kalinga Woolloowin Residents Association (KWRA) which has already lodged a submission on behalf of its members and I wholly support the KWRA's submission.

I am also a resident of Kedron (an area substantially impacted by the Airport Link (APL) project). Since August 2008, I have attended monthly meetings as a Community Liaison Group (CLG) member for the Kedron area. These CLG meetings are a condition imposed by the Coordinator General on APL.

I have been disheartened by the lack of transparency from all parties (contractor and government alike) throughout the past three or more years. It has seemed to me that, from the outset, there was no intention of full disclosure regarding the impacts on the community of APL. Concerned residents have had to relentlessly pursue accurate answers to their questions, mostly to no avail.

As my understanding of the entities involved with APL has grown, I have reached the conclusion that the old adage "a fish goes rotten from the head" holds true in my home State of Queensland. It is my opinion that CNI has fostered, aided and abetted the veil of secrecy regarding the true and long-lasting impacts of APL. Obviously, CNI's core and fundamental belief was that it was not subject to RTI legislation and was not required to display "transparency". This fundamental belief translated into behaviour which was then aped by all those associated with APL. From a trickle-down effect, it has become a deluge. To me, it beggars belief that substantial amounts of government funds have been expended to defend City North Infrastructure's (CNI) position that it is not subject to RTI legislation.

In innumerable documents provided to both the CLG members and the community at large, CNI has been referred to as a Government Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). This creates the impression that CNI represents the government of the State of Queensland and by extension, its people. If the intent of the RTI legislation is to deliver "open and accountable" Government, then in the case of CNI at least, the legislation has failed. Such a clear failure must be remedied and a clear, unambiguous message sent that government agencies deliberately acting to exploit a "loophole" in legislation will be properly dealt with. Those with nothing to hide, have nothing to fear.

I have seen my community suffer over the past three years. I have seen businesses close or sent to the wall; I have seen personal relationships falter; I have seen mothers fear for the well-being of their newborns; I have seen my friends and neighbours leave the area just to salvage their peace of mind; I have seen entire families fall ill with dust-related illnesses; I have even attended the funeral of a resident who slipped through the cracks wrought by the APL project. These are serious and long-lasting effects to individuals, the community and ultimately to the mores and standards of the State of Queensland.

If CNI was intended as a representative of the Queensland Government (and by extension, its people) then CNI and associated officials should be deeply ashamed to have hidden behind a "loophole" to renege on their duty and responsibility to the people of Queensland, and in particular the residents all along the project alignment.

In closing, I firmly believe that the amendment to the RTI legislation should be upheld. I reiterate the closing comments of the KWRA:

"To falter at this stage would be to open the door to encouraging an old school mentality "leave it to us - we know what is best for you". We implore you to hold the line, close off this current loophole in the RTI Act, send a clear unambiguous message that future loopholes will be dealt with accordingly and finally establish an open and accountable future as envisioned in the Solomon Report and Government Response for all citizens of Queensland."

Yours Sincerely
Anastasia Dick