



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 28 April 2004

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (5.38 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'House' are omitted and the following words inserted—

'applauds the accountability and transparency mechanisms of the Beattie Labor Government as recently evidenced by its proper administration of FOI laws and its handling of the Lockhart River matter, particularly in its dealings with the CMC which stated on page 16 of its report "On the contrary, the evidence is that the Premier and Chief of Staff acted entirely appropriately and were of assistance to the police in the matter.'

I advise the House that the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, Liddy Clark, would have been participating in this debate but she had already been given leave by me to present a keynote address to the south Queensland region community justice group forum in Toowoomba.

In her recently published memoirs, former National Party minister Di McCauley recalled that she had been accused in parliament of having been fêted at lunch by a representative of a development company which later benefited from a rezoning decision. In parliament she denied the allegation as she had been unaware of the businessman's involvement in the development company. Later she learnt that the opposition—that is us, the Labor Party—had put in an FOI request in relation to all of the documents associated with the company or the rezoning decision.

Amongst the documents found was a briefing note which stated that the person with whom she had had lunch did indeed hold a position with the company in question and it detailed the company's activity. In her book, Di McCauley said she had never seen the briefing note before the FOI search. However, she said—

In the end, I was ordered by the Premier's legal man—

that is Rob Borbidge's legal man—

to send all of the paperwork pertaining to the matter to Cabinet and, in this way, the papers were exempt from FOI.

Exempt for 30 years! To have the National Party come in here and talk about accountability is like talking about Dracula being in charge of the blood bank. I table that extract from the book. The Leader of the Opposition, Lawrence Springborg, was a minister in the Borbidge government. That is how they treated FOI and cabinet. For those opposite to come in here and talk about FOI is nonsense. Di McCauley also said that she would never vote for her successor in Callide.

**Mr Seeney:** I don't want her to.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The Deputy Leader of the Opposition never wanted her to vote for him. Her exact words were—

... it seemed to me that Seeney was indeed the ugly face of politics and I wanted nothing to do with him.

I am sure she is not alone. I am also sure that many people would be concerned about the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's commitment to accountability.

**Mr SEENEY:** Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order. I want to make the Premier aware that 74 per cent of my electorate did vote for me.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That is not a point of order.

**Mr BEATTIE:** That does not include Di McCauley, the former member. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition's commitment to accountability in the democratic process is certainly open to question.

He publicly admitted—and I included that transcript in *Hansard*—making false claims in this parliament as a tactical ploy. In other words, he is a tactical liar and he admitted it.

**Mr SEENEY:** Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order. That is untrue and the Premier knows it is untrue. If the Premier would like to re-open that debate, I would be only too happy to debate it. I have a nice little file that I have not used yet.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Resume your seat!

**Mr BEATTIE:** Here is a man who attacks my government yet admits, in his own words—and I table the transcript that is on the record of this parliament—to using tactical ploys, to saying things in this House and elsewhere that he does not believe. Yet he talks about accountability.

**Mr SEENEY:** Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order. I find that reference offensive. I ask that it be withdrawn. It is not true.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I withdraw it. The opposition this week deliberately set out to undermine the parliament and its institutions. They are not prepared to accept the umpire's decision. The opposition criticises the CMC when it does not give them the outcome they want. It is behaving like a spoilt brat. When they do not get what they want they attack the independent umpire.

In contrast, the government fully supports the parliament and the institutions of the parliament even when those institutions take actions that could harm the government. So systematic are our accountability measures on this side that it was I who sent the material on the Lockhart River issue to the CMC, unsolicited. I would have accepted the outcome regardless of what it was.

Let us have a look at the accountability measures. We go well beyond the statutory requirements for tabling information. For example, we routinely table in parliament six-monthly reports of ministerial office expenses. That is something the coalition never did. We have annual reports from departments that are far more comprehensive and transparent than annual reports of the coalition. I have also recently tabled in parliament the following: advertising expenses for major campaigns such as the Rugby Union World Cup, details of use of the government jet and a string of others.

In addition to that, we have published hospital elective surgery waiting times every quarter. We are publishing on the community's information gateway web site. We are seeking Queensland's view on the proposal to publish information about year 12 achievements. No government has been as accountable as mine.