



Speech by

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Hansard Tuesday, 29 November 2005

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (10.24 pm): I rise to inform the House of the shocking culture that has crept into the executive of this parliament. As we all recall, the interaction between the bureaucracy and ministers recently has seen at least one minister being investigated by the Crime and Misconduct Commission. In just another case of the Beattie government playing to the tune of 'jobs for the boys', Leon Allan has been given the position of General Manager—Retail Contestability at Ergon. It was only last year that Mr Allan was working in the then Treasurer Terry Mackenroth's office. He also has a history of having been in the Premier's office.

Before the crisis that enveloped Energex last year, Mr Allan was advised by Energex of the shortfall in electricity that was going to occur as a result of the government stripping money and resources and a lack of infrastructure development by the company, but he then did not pass this on to the Treasurer. This lead to the term 'dead letter office' being coined in relation to Mr Allan. The Treasurer then claimed to all and sundry that he never received the information and now, for his act of protecting the Treasurer and ignoring advice that Queensland's electricity grid was going to crumble in 2003-04, Mr Allan has been duly rewarded with a high-paying position. The act of deliberately not passing on vital information by Mr Allan gives us an insight into the endemic culture in this government that runs to members of the bureaucracy. It is a system which lets ministers give the parliamentary equivalent of 'the dog ate my homework' excuse for why they are failing to meet their portfolio responsibilities. What do we hear from ministers? 'I wasn't told. I wasn't advised. Nobody told me. So I'm not responsible for whatever has gone wrong in my portfolio.'

In return, it gives public servants who remain loyal to the government instead of to their duties and responsibilities a chance to move up the food chain in Queensland's ever-burgeoning bureaucracy—a bureaucracy that was going to be reduced but keeps growing like Topsy under this government. The truth is, if Mr Allan cannot even be relied upon to pass potentially damaging information on to a minister when he is in the background, how can he be relied upon to accurately inform the government when something goes wrong in his new position, which is a far more prominent one? This dangerous culture of playing politics before serving the people shows that this government is terminally irresponsible. The outcome is still the same from a government with the wrong priorities—a bad outcome for the people of Queensland.