



Speech by

Simon Finn

MEMBER FOR YEERONGPILLY

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MOTION: NUTTALL, MR G

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (6.01 pm): I rise to support the amendment.

Mr Dempsey: Be nice, Simon.

Mr FINN: I will be nice, Jack, and you be nice too. The motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition is absurd. It is a return to the bad old days of the National Party. It attempts to interfere with the independent function of the DPP. Members should think about this: it attempts to instruct the Attorney-General to instruct the DPP to provide a brief prepared for potential actions in the courts to a parliamentary committee whose role is to determine parliamentary proceedings. The simple absurdity of this is that the DPP has no role in determining contempt of parliament and the ethics committee has no role in determining criminal matters before the courts. This is what we have come to expect from those opposite. The Liberal National Party is bereft of its own ethics, devoid of accountability and ignorant of the importance of the separation of powers.

Firstly, let us look at their historical record, apart from their rorted electoral boundaries. Under National Party rule in this state there was no CJC, no CMC, no estimates committee process, no police ethics committee and no freedom of information. There was not even a parliamentary committee system. These things, which Queenslanders see as central to the delivery of parliamentary democracy today, were all implemented by Labor governments, because Labor governments are reformers. It is clear that those opposite have not changed a bit. They might have a new name, a new logo, a new website and some glossy billboards, but they are the same old National Party.

Let us look at their recent history. What is their recent history in this place? It has been to do nothing. Despite weeks of action by the Premier in providing to the people an open account of the government's activities, they have revealed nothing. What has the government done? It has referred any suggestion of inappropriate activity to the CMC. We have passed legislation creating a new offence of misconduct in public office. That offence enables the courts to deal with matters relating to serious misconduct in the public sector. We have announced a nation-first ban on pointless success fees that only serve to build community distrust in the political process. We have announced a ban on all members of the Labor caucus attending political fundraising events where businesses pay on the basis that they will have access to members of parliament. These are significant reforms by a government that is leading the way and they build on groundbreaking right to information laws, new levels of public scrutiny of cabinet deliberations and a reformed parliamentary committee structure.

Most importantly, we have released a whole-of-government review of integrity and accountability issues—a green paper that is the first of its kind in more than 20 years. This green paper provides all Queenslanders with an opportunity to determine issues of accountability and integrity in government at the point of our 150th year. This green paper is about consulting with Queenslanders about the type of democracy they want to take our state forward. I do not want to pre-empt the outcomes of the green paper deliberations, but I do know that Queenslanders will want us to move forward and not backwards. They will want us to move into the future and not back to the future.

What today's motion proves and what the inaction of the opposition leader in recent weeks proved is that going backwards is their only policy. For three weeks all we have heard is a rave about allegations in

the media, but we have seen no action. Not once has the opposition leader come into this place and advised the House of the reference of any matter to the CMC. Not once has the opposition leader come into this place with a plan to address accountability issues in government. Even after being repeatedly asked, he still will not release a list of attendees at his party's \$20,000-a-plate fundraiser. While we reform, they resist; while we disclose, they dither.

It beggars belief that the Leader of the Opposition would put forward such a motion under the pretence that this is all about accountability and integrity. It is little more than an attack on the independence of parliament. It strikes at the heart of democracy in today's Queensland and it is little more than fundamental National Party policy. The Premier leads her party; this opposition leader is led by his. I commend the amendment to the House.