




Speech By
Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

MOTION: BLIGH LABOR GOVERNMENT, LOBBYISTS REGISTERS

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (12.29 pm): I guess the reason why we need to have an extension past the 12.30 mark is that this whole debate has been a complete nonsense and some of the interjections we have heard across the chamber have been a complete nonsense. This is quite simply a cynical exercise. It is a cynical exercise and, as I said this morning, it is a stunt. It is stunt that is being perpetrated on the people of Queensland. Unfortunately, this is all about detracting attention from what everyone knows is the elephant in the room—that is, discussing the issues around the member for Redcliffe and the use or otherwise potential allegations of misuse of public funding by an LNP member. I think this entire debate has been an insult to the people of Queensland. It has been sprung on the parliament at no notice. It is quite simply a stunt, and the Attorney-General knows it full well. Even the Attorney-General, who certainly likes to hear his own voice resonate in this chamber, was having difficulty at times coming up with a logical and coherent argument on this motion.

Very simply, the amended motion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition is about making sure that all ministers of the Newman cabinet put forward their contacts with lobbyists—their registers—as we have seen in a couple of examples. Of course the government will not go for that in the spirit of openness, accountability and transparency—as they keep repeating—because it might mean a few more ministerial scalps in addition to those that have already been lost under this government. To have lost three ministers and a hand-picked director-general all to do with issues of murkiness and cloudiness—

Ms BATES: I rise to a point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: What is your point of order, member for Mudgeeraba?

Ms BATES: Madam Speaker, I find the imputations of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—or whatever his title is—offensive. In particular, I note that I stepped down from my role through ill health and family reasons and not for murky reasons, and I find it—

Madam SPEAKER: I will ask the member to take her seat. I did not hear the specific point. Did it specifically refer to the member for Mudgeeraba?

Mr PITT: Three ministers.

Mr Bleijje: Of which she was one.

Madam SPEAKER: I am going to allow that due to the scope and ask if the Manager of Opposition Business will withdraw that comment.

Mr PITT: In the spirit of the way this parliament operates, I withdraw. There is no way I would want to offend the sensitivities of the member for Mudgeeraba. We do know that she has suffered

from ill health, but that does not detract in any way, shape or form from the performance of this government and the way that I believe it has brought the standards down. The government believes with the majority it has in the House that it can run roughshod over anything and anyone it comes across, as is evident from the way it is using the parliament today as its plaything. The government is using the parliament in a stunt to divert attention away from an issue that we know should well and truly be talked about in the media and in the public arena.

The government talks about integrity and accountability all the time yet omits that it was the Labor Party which introduced integrity and accountability reforms. It was us when we were in office who implemented the important aspects of the Fitzgerald report. It was Labor that established Australia's first Integrity Commissioner. It was Labor that enshrined the register of lobbyists in legislation. It was Labor that banned the payment of success fees for lobbyists.

Mr Dempsey interjected.

Mr PITT: This is an important one. The minister might want to listen to this one particularly. It was Labor that banned cash-for-access events in Queensland. What do we know about cash-for-access events? What we know about cash-for-access events is there is still the outstanding issue of the \$20,000-a-plate dinner when the LNP was in opposition which no-one knows who attended. I think that sends very clear signals as to how some decisions have been made under this government.

They talk about wanting to have retrospectivity applied. Well, let us retrospectively apply everything in terms of the shadow cabinet as it stood under the LNP. I do not see them being proactive, as the Attorney-General has put it, to put those things into the public domain. Why? Because that would give people too much of an idea as to why they have made some of the decisions that they have made in office. I think that is a question that also needs to be answered, but of course it will not be answered because it is not an open and accountable government. It is not about openness and accountability and that is, I guess, the biggest shame of this.

What we see again is the three Ds—deflection, diversion and distraction. That is what this is all about. That is what we have come to expect from the Newman LNP government. It is a real shame that we are subjecting the people of Queensland to this debate. It is an erroneous suggestion that is being put forward today. It really should not be taking up the time of parliament. We have government business that we could be looking at—namely, an important body corporate bill—but we are taking time away from doing that work to go for a political agenda and a diversion. They should be ashamed of themselves. It is more of the same. It seems the LNP is taking inspiration from George Orwell's writing. The Premier can keep kidding himself, but simply saying 'open and accountable' so many times does not make it so. That is what we know about the LNP: they talk the talk but they certainly do not walk the walk.

Interruption.