




Speech By
Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

**FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE: REPORT, MOTION TO TAKE
NOTE**

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.23 am): On 27 March 2013 the Finance and Administration Committee tabled its report No. 26, *Oversight of the Queensland Integrity Commissioner 2012 and review of Lobbyists Code of Conduct*. Although honourable members have talked about the bipartisan approach this committee took, I note that the Manager of Opposition Business used the opportunity in this debate to have a crack at the LNP government and some people involved in politics in Queensland. Let me respond to that. I was not going to politicise the report but having been given the opportunity and a slap in the face by the member for Mulgrave I will respond accordingly.

I would really like to know how many times Bill Ludwig, for instance, met with the Labor Party ministry during their term in office. But guess what? They cannot find their lobbyists register. They were put into archive boxes and no-one is any the wiser. No-one can find their lobbyists register. The honourable member opposite who criticises the LNP was a minister of the Crown who now cannot find his lobbyists register. Was it an administrative oversight of his office? Where is the lobbyists register of the member for Mulgrave, a former minister of the Crown? I would dearly like to know how many times and on which occasions the militant thugs in the unions in Queensland met with Labor Party ministers, but they cannot find the register. This is coming from an opposition which when in government set up this whole integrity process. It set up this process—this muddled, inconceivable, confusing process of a lobbyist register in Queensland. The Labor Party set it up and it cannot even abide by its own laws.

The government will respond accordingly to the recommendations of this report in the future. It is no secret—and I mentioned this in this House, particularly when I moved some amendments last year—that these lobbyist rules in Queensland are confusing to everybody concerned. They are so confusing, as I said, that the former government which introduced it cannot find any of its lobbyist registers and will not put them forward into the public domain. This government in the short space of 12 months has introduced for the first time in an Australian jurisdiction the tabling of ministerial diaries. The Premier has introduced the tabling of ministerial diaries so people can see third parties we are meeting with on a daily basis as we table them each month. I have amended the RTI Act to say that when an RTI application is given to the requisite applicant it is released to the world at large. Not only do we give the applicant who paid for the RTI application all the documents associated with it; we release it at exactly the same time to the world at large so every Queenslanders has an opportunity to have a look at it.

We also have the open data website—another first in this country. Queensland is leading the way, but I hasten to add that with respect to lobbying activities and the code of conduct I made it abundantly clear when I introduced legislation to amend the act last year that the government's intention was for ministers not to keep a lobbyist register. If a lobbyist conducts a meeting with a minister, then the lobbyist will keep the register. What we see now is a more bureaucratic document with guidelines about to be issued, if the Integrity Commissioner has his way, which state that not only

will the lobbyist tell us who they are meeting but we will publish the details every month. That was never the intention. The intention was that the register is there so that if the Integrity Commissioner has concerns he or she can have a look at the register. But the Integrity Commissioner's intention is to release all this information again to the world at large despite the fact that registers will be required to be kept, ministers are releasing their diaries, people have open and accessible information to government data and the RTI Act has been amended so people can see every application that has been administered.

I do have concerns with respect to the code of conduct that has been issued by the Integrity Commissioner. I think the confusing aspect of it is that it is not engrained in legislation. Any Integrity Commissioner at any period of time can just amend the code of conduct and we have a different applicable law. Ken Smith, the former DG, could not work it out when he issued a directive in the former government. They said that you have to keep the registers but you do not have to keep the contact registers. By the way, an e-mail is probably not a contact. It is a confusing nightmare that we will eventually sort out. I do thank the committee for looking at this issue.