



Speech By  
**Scott Stewart**


**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

---

Record of Proceedings, 29 October 2015

**MOTION**

**Member for Cook, Order for Production of Documents**

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (6.29 pm): I rise to obviously not support the motion that is before the House. It is interesting to note that only the member for Hinchinbrook addressed the motion. The motion orders the Premier to produce to this House all inward and outward email correspondence between the Premier's staff, or ministers, or ministerial staff and the member for Cook or his office since 30 March that provides assistance with speeches, media, event attendance or advance notice of government announcements. The Right to Information Act 2009 states very clearly the following—

Parliament recognises that in a free and democratic society—

- (a) there should be open discussion of public affairs; and
- (b) information in the government's possession or under the government's control is a public resource; and
- (c) the community should be kept informed of government's operations, including, in particular, the rules and practice followed by government in its dealings with members of the community; and
- (d) openness in government enhances the accountability of government; and
- (e) openness in government increases the participation of members of the community in democratic processes.

Perhaps the members opposite are unaware of the right-to-information application. I will table the document.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland government: Right to Information and Information Privacy Access Application [[1527](#)].

If the members opposite do not have a blank copy, I will provide one for them so that they can fill it in. I am of the understanding that they have already done that and they have already submitted it. The information is sitting there, but they have not picked it up yet. But I offer them this blank form just in case they need another one. They can fill it in and submit it and then they will get all the information that they are requesting. The members opposite do not need to order the Premier; all they need to do is to complete the right-to-information form, submit it and all of that information will be provided. If the members opposite need help, I am more than willing to assist them to complete the form.

Once again, we see those opposite trashing the basic process of Westminster government, showing so little regard for this institution—the parliament, its members and the responsibilities that we have to use parliament's powers appropriately. We saw what little respect they had for proper processes during those three shocking years that they were on the other side of the chamber. During that time there were attacks on democracy, on important institutions such as our courts, the legal profession, doctors and firefighters. They were all within their sights. During that time there were also attacks on the CCC. Even this parliament's own committees were under attack by those opposite when they were in government. Although the issue of proper process might seem a boring subject to the members opposite—indeed, the concept of proper process might seem offensive to some opposite—when it comes to government and when it comes to this parliament, it matters.

As a former teacher and then a high school principal, I understand the need for a proper process, especially when we are dealing with public funding and the time of public servants. As the Attorney-General has already spelt out for us this evening, those opposite already applied for this information under the Right to Information Act—and, as I have said already, I am more than happy to help those opposite to complete another application form if they need to—but they were simply too lazy to pick it up.

I ask members to imagine just for a minute that, as a teacher, I ask my students to complete an assignment, ask them to hand it in by a certain date, have the pile of assignments waiting in the classroom to be marked, but I could not be bothered picking them up. Then a few months later I start complaining that I could not get access to those students' work. Then a few months later I ask them to do the same assignment all over again. But that is not all. When the students are halfway through doing that, I then demand that the principal order the release of those assignments. It is an absolutely absurd situation, yet those opposite are asking us to do exactly that.

**Mr Cramp** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** One moment. Pause the clock. Member for Gaven, I would urge you to desist or you will follow the lead of the member for Nanango.

**Mr STEWART:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. As a proud North Queenslander, I could not stand by and watch how the LNP was destroying our state. I did not run for parliament and ask my constituents to put their faith in me to play petty political games because those opposite still cannot come to grips with the fact that the people of Queensland rejected their type of government. As a result, the LNP squandered the largest parliamentary majority in parliament's history. Let us get back to the real issues facing Townsville and Queensland: jobs, jobs, jobs.