




Speech By  
**Scott Stewart**

**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

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Record of Proceedings, 3 December 2015

**MOTION**

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (6.16 pm): This is a desperate opposition. This is an opposition that is showing reckless disregard for the safety of Queenslanders. This is a serious matter. It is a criminal matter that is currently under investigation. The opposition has tried to play politics on this, yet again. They have stood here and demanded that the minister release more information. The minister has always said that she will not act against the advice from the police and the Queensland Government Chief Information Officer by providing commentary that could undermine their ongoing investigations. That would be reckless. It would put Queenslanders at further risk. But those opposite ignored the minister.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Townsville, one moment. There are a number of members having conversations. I urge them to take those conversations outside.

**Mr STEWART:** I understand that on 13 November the Minister for Education offered a confidential briefing on this matter to the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Surfers Paradise and the member for Everton and their staff, so that they could talk directly to police, the Queensland Government Chief Information Officer, as well as department officials. I seek leave to table an email between the member for Everton and the chief of staff of the Minister for Education. The email states—

Dear Mr Mander,

This briefing will cover confidential information relating to an ongoing investigation into a criminal matter and, therefore, cannot be conducted via telephone.

*Tabled paper:* Emails, dated November 2015, between the member for Everton, Mr Tim Mander MP, and chief of staff to Hon. Kate Jones, Ms Verena McCarthy, regarding a briefing from the Department of Education and Training [[1848](#)].

I understand the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Surfers Paradise ignored this invitation and did not even bother to reply to the email. However, the member for Everton, always looking for ways to rise above his leader, said that he would attend the briefing on behalf of the opposition. I understand that six days later the member for Everton made time for the briefing—six days later. As the minister has said, in that briefing the police and the Queensland Government Chief Information Officer both outlined that the release of further information could undermine their investigations. Today, we have seen the member for Everton blatantly ignore that advice from the police and the Queensland government Chief Information Officer. This is a clear dismissal of their professional advice and a complete disregard of them and the positions they hold.

We will not stoop to their level. On this side of the House we will act with openness, accountability and integrity. That is why the minister offered the confidential briefing to the member for Everton in the first place. We will always act on the advice of the experts. We will not ignore police or the Queensland Government Chief Information Officer. This motion is nothing more than a try-on and a political stunt. Not only that, it is also potentially dangerous as it portrays a cavalier disregard for proper police and criminal investigation processes and, if supported, could well jeopardise those ongoing sensitive

investigations. We will not be acting against the advice of the experts in the form of the police and the government CIO, and we will not be commenting on this criminal matter. I call upon those opposite to stop playing politics on this serious matter; to stop calling on the government to release information when they know full well that to do so would be against the advice of the experts. Not only was this stunt reckless and irresponsible, but, as the minister said, the member for Everton showed that he could not even get the simple motion right. He could not even get his facts straight the first time. He tried to move the motion on Tuesday and was forced to make an embarrassing withdrawal.

Of course, the member for Everton has a bit of form in this area. Who could forget the infamous nitwit-gate incident a few sittings ago when he made that interjection in this chamber. He initially denied making the comment but was caught out by the upstairs referee—the audio recording. He later made a gobbling withdrawal, while still swearing black and blue that he did not know that he even said it. It seems that poor old 'Mandy' does not even know what he is saying half the time.

This motion is just another example of the opposition trashing proper process and administration. It shows a disturbing pattern of behaviour—exploiting information the government has provided in good faith through correspondence or private briefings offered to opposition MPs and then throwing it back in the government's face by rejecting that advice and turning it into stunts in this House.

*(Time expired)*