



Speech By  
**Tim Mander**


**MEMBER FOR EVERTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 October 2015

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Department of Education**

 **Mr MANDER (Everton—LNP) (12.25 pm):** Madam Deputy Speaker, last week the long-awaited and much overdue Deloitte Australia report into the IT bungle which led to child protection reports not getting through to the appropriate authorities was finally released, and I am glad that the pressure I put on the minister during the last parliamentary sitting finally led to this report being made public. Whilst I am glad that that report was released, the report asks more questions than it answers.

Let us start with the core objectives of the report. Three questions were given to Deloitte to try to find answers to, but they missed one very vital question—to me the most important question—which is why were they not asked to find out why it took so long for the minister to detect these problems? That was never asked, and that is the most pressing question. Even more worrying is that the report states that EQ staff did know that some of these reports were not getting through. During the estimates hearing I asked the minister directly about this and she answered—

... everyone I have spoken to since I became the minister has advised me that the system was working.

Minister, the system was obviously not working and her department had examples and knew that it had not got through to the Queensland Police Service. I pressed the minister continually about this issue. I asked her whether she just accepted the advice of her public servants or whether she asked the investigative questions that were necessary to make sure that we keep the Public Service accountable. She has obviously never had a handle on this situation, and to me that means that due to her megaportfolio responsibilities she cannot spend the time that she needs to solely on education. The other question that this report does not address is what agency has the responsibility for the student protection reporting process end to end: is it Education Queensland, is it Child Safety or is it the Queensland Police Service? Are bureaucratic silos hindering the ability of schools to protect our most vulnerable students?

What has been the minister's response to this review? The deputy opposition leader referred to some of this today. Despite the minister initially taking the high ground and saying that she would not play politics with such a sensitive issue, she has done nothing but since this report has been released and she has been absolutely desperate. She has had to go to the Carmody report and she has had to look at IT staff, things that are not mentioned in the report or given any credence whatsoever. This minister is so political—it is so much in her DNA—that she cannot fight the fact that she had to sheet blame somewhere else other than to herself. She has also looked for scapegoats, and there has been some very disturbing information that has come to light about some of these scapegoats that the department has blamed for this particular error. The contractor who made the coding error in the first place realised he made a mistake, identified it himself, told people about it and has been sacked for his honesty. This has sent ripples right through the IT department—in fact, all IT departments in every

government agency. Because of the department's actions in sacking this man they are now terrified about admitting mistakes and are terrified about undertaking any reforms that are necessary.

Even worse than that, a hardworking CIO has also been sacked. Some from industry would say that this is the most effective, efficient CIO in the government. This man is known to work from six o'clock in the morning to eight o'clock at night and has been sought after in industry for years but stayed with the department because he wants the best for the state school system. This guy was also brought in and summarily sacked, on the spot, because of this minister looking for scapegoats and not taking responsibility for this at all.

The reason for this IT bungle was a simple coding error, but the minister commissioned a \$1.1 million report to tell us nothing we do not already know. The Minister for Education needs to admit that the lack of time she spends in the Education portfolio and her meek acceptance of the advice she receives from department officials has led to these errors not being detected as soon as they should have been.

*(Time expired)*