




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

Record of Proceedings, 24 August 2017

MOTION: MINISTER FOR CORRECTIVE SERVICES

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (6.20 pm): I rise this evening to oppose the motion moved by the member for Everton in this House and to express my support and confidence in the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and the government.

All those who seek and attain public office are cognisant of the oaths we swear: to work in the interests of those we are elected to serve and to abide by the laws we all swear to uphold. It is a solemn and serious responsibility. As elected members of this House we are the beneficiaries not only of the honour to serve but of the great gift of the public's trust. It is a gift that is special and must be handled with care. We are therefore bound by duty and compelled by conscience to comply with the law and to do the right thing, to seek advice and to navigate our way through, particularly those members of the executive and particularly at those times when we confront complex and difficult issues.

Parliament, quite rightly, is a chamber of robust debate—our way of civilising the contest of ideas whose fate is determined by a free election of eligible voters. It is the people of Queensland, the people of our state, who ultimately hold us to account. They make the final determination of whether or not they feel we have met the standards they set for us. The elections we hold in this state provide the mechanism by which our parliaments are constituted and our governments are formed. They reflect the will of the people. It is no trivial matter to challenge their judgement by moving motions such as the one we are moving tonight, which seeks to withdraw the confidence of the people's house in the member chosen by the voters of Morayfield and nominated by the Premier to be the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and to discharge his responsibilities as Minister for Corrective Services.

The member for Morayfield, the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services, is as diligent and industrious as any minister in this House. In the 10 months since he was appointed he has travelled across the length and breadth of this state visiting regional and remote communities, visiting serving police officers who protect the people of our state across the length and breadth of our state, visiting those firefighters who do the same thing, supporting our government's commitment to ensure that Queenslanders—no matter where they live, no matter who they are, no matter where they come from originally—have a fair shot of living a life free of violence and the travails of crime.

We are bound by law not to reveal all we know. That is the truth for those of us who serve in the executive government. There are confidences we are compelled to keep and information we are prohibited from sharing. The same law covers all public servants in this state who are not given a choice to release information because the law binds all of us. It is not a choice we make. It is not at its heart a political decision: it is a restriction placed upon us by legal provisions that have been drafted in this House by many of us to protect the rights of all citizens.

The minister has made it clear that he was bound by a duty of confidentiality not to release information. He discharged his duty and he should not be held to any other account than doing his duty according to law. The granting of parole is not a decision made by the Minister for Corrective Services.

It is quite properly—and should always be—a decision independent of executive government, and those who seek to politicise that decision-making process would undermine a fundamental tenet of the rule of law. It would undermine—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I apologise for interrupting, Minister, but there is too much discussion. You have the call.

Mr DICK: The minister has at all times acted in accordance with what he understood were his responsibilities and what he was advised were his responsibilities. He has kept the confidence that he felt he was bound by law to respect. Respect for the rule of law is central to everything that we do in the executive and that all members of parliament should do. Those politicians, including those members of the opposition, who want to climb into the high castle of moral leadership should come with clean hands—not an opposition that ignored families who were damaged by the Barrett closure. If they want to climb into the high castle of cruelty—and they are the words that have been used tonight—they should come here with clean hands. We will not be judged by the LNP when they are yet to apologise. This minister has apologised. No-one could understand the suffering of the Pullen family, but this minister has apologised, quite properly, to them.