



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**


**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 10 October 2017

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

### **Local Government, Integrity and Accountability**

 **Hon. M FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.52 am): In the past 2½ years the Palaszczuk government has implemented a rolling reform agenda for local government in Queensland. Since being appointed as the Minister for Local Government earlier this year I have made it my priority to continue Labor's strong record on transparency and accountability.

Already we have lowered the council disclosure threshold to \$500 and legislated to make sure council candidate bank accounts are accountable. We also introduced real-time donation reporting, which was used for the first time during the Ipswich City Council by-election. Earlier this year we announced our plans to introduce a new independent assessor to deal with council complaints, along with a mandatory code of conduct for councillors. I am pleased to say that this week I will introduce legislation into the parliament to put these new measures into practice. These are measures I hope will receive the full support of both sides of the chamber.

We will build on our record of reform with even more steps to stamp out corruption. This follows the release of the Crime and Corruption Commission's Operation Belcarra report last week, with 31 recommendations to address integrity and corruption risk in local government. Today I can confirm, as mentioned earlier by the Premier, that the Palaszczuk government will support the 31 recommendations, making this the biggest local government reform in Queensland's history. At the centre of our reforms are a complete ban on developer donations and an overhaul of councillor conflict of interest procedures. Like all Queenslanders, I was concerned to see the *Four Corners* report which showed councillors taking donations from developers and then feeling free to vote on approvals for those very same developers. We want to make sure that does not happen and are absolutely intent on bringing the system into line with community expectations.

As the Premier has said, these changes to local government will also apply at a state level. Because transparency and accountability are hallmarks of this Palaszczuk Labor government, we are committed to ensuring a modern, fair, transparent and accountable local government system in Queensland.