



Speech By  
**Tim Nicholls**


**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 March 2017

## **MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

### **Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply, Email Account**

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.42 am): What a farce we have seen this morning. It is unbelievable that yet again another round of questioning from the opposition has drawn out more information that the Premier would otherwise not have revealed. This is a Premier who was elected and said, 'My credo, my hallmark will be openness and transparency,' but whose actions are anything but—whose actions are in direct contradiction to her statements.

It was not until the fourth question in question time today that the Premier actually said that her director-general has excused himself from the investigation into Minister Bailey's murky email trail, has referred himself to the CCC and will take no further part until advice is received from the CCC. This is a Premier who refuses to fully explain why she does not stand aside a minister whose alleged conduct if proved will constitute corrupt conduct according to the CCC report.

We now have the situation where the Premier has said the investigation will continue under the supervision of the State Archivist. That is not correct. The CCC investigation, and I quote from the letter, is this—

We consider the matters appropriate for the Director-General Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Mr David Stewart, to deal with subject to the CCC's monitoring role. The CCC has directed Mr Stewart to provide a report to the CCC at the conclusion of a number of specific inquiries.

There is no mention of the State Archivist. There is no mention of any other person conducting the inquiry other than the Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Mr David Stewart. I believe that the Premier has misled the House this morning in her answer. I will be writing to the Speaker in respect of that matter, given that it clearly contravenes the written advice of the CCC.

That does not in any way, shape or form cover off the fact that the Premier still refuses to do the right thing and stand Minister Bailey aside. Minister Bailey has himself not taken the appropriate action. He has not stood up and said that he has made mistakes. He seems to try to recover every step of the way by defending, obscuring and then finally relenting to the extent where he has now finally reactivated an email account that has 30,000 emails in it, which is now subject to investigation, which he was again dragged kicking and screaming to do—something he ought to have known to do in the first place.

The director-general by contrast has done the right thing. As soon as the allegation was raised on a website and became known, he referred the matter to the CCC and has volunteered to stand aside from the investigation. Given the relationships that are alleged with respect to the director-general and his wife formerly with Minister Bailey, when Mr Bailey was in the council, I completely support the director-general's decision. He has made the right and proper decision to go down that path.

The question has to be asked: why does Minister Bailey refuse to do the same? If it is good enough for the director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the most senior public servant in Queensland, to take that action, why is it not appropriate for a minister of the Crown, holding high office, administering hundreds of millions of dollars, making decisions that affect the lives of thousands of Queensland, not to do the same thing? Minister Bailey's actions, whilst they defy explanation, do not defy the expectations of this government. We have seen a Premier who is incapable of making a decision, whether it is building a road or getting a licence or taking action against a minister who has done the wrong thing. This government, under this Premier, refuses to do the right thing.

Let us just look at the record. We have the member for Bundamba. I quoted in my three-minute private member's statement the findings of the CCC in relation to the member for Bundamba. Was she stood aside? Did the Premier take action? No, we had to wait for the member for Bundamba to realise her position was untenable.

We remember the short-lived career of the member for Bundaberg. Did the Premier stand her aside? She said, 'I will take strong action.' What happened? The member for Bundaberg resigned herself. The Premier did not take strong action.

We had the member for Sandgate—the poor, beleaguered member for Sandgate—who stood there for months and months. He was the man for the job. The Premier had the expectation that he would fix the problem with the rail network and as soon as he got the report he resigned. Did the Premier sack him? No, she did not.

We had the member for Cook who, at the beginning of this parliament, resigned but was not sacked by the Premier at that time. Now we have the member for Yeerongpilly, who continues to cling and grasp to the ministerial leather as if his life depended on it, refusing to do the right thing as well. Again, we have a Premier who refuses to take action to enforce ministerial standards, to make her ministers accountable to the people of Queensland, even when the clear advice from the CCC is that the allegations if proved would constitute corrupt conduct.

Any shred of credibility that this Premier has in relation to transparency, openness, honesty and accountability of her government is disintegrating in front of her eyes today. This Premier has no option but to stand this minister aside. Obviously the power of the factions and the union movement is keeping him in place, because we know that there are ructions going on over there on the other side. Word has crept to us that there is movement at the station, that there is unhappiness with the member for Mulgrave, the Treasurer and now trade minister, in the selling of his portfolio and the way he does things. I understand that the mean girls are ganging up over there—the member for South Brisbane, the member for Ashgrove and the member for Waterford are putting the weights on. The member for Ashgrove, I understand, is the front runner to take on that role from the member for Mulgrave.

**Mr Powell** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I do not think I will take that interjection at the moment. Nonetheless, the mean girls are ganging up against the member for Mulgrave. Moves are afoot. I understand that there is a warm reception to that move in the caucus as well. I understand that there is a high degree of sympathy for that view from the mean girls as they line up to take action. It seems that the member for Mulgrave might be involuntarily reassigned to another position, unlike the member for Yeerongpilly, who is obviously from the Left faction and who is obviously getting the benefit of the protection of the numbers in cabinet despite all of the failings.

The member for South Brisbane seems to have an obsession with my travels throughout the state and has been following me closely. I note that she said something about the fact that I had a pot rather than a schooner. Of course, those of us who grew up in Queensland, as I did, know that the schooner is an import from New South Wales and the traditional drink in Queensland, as served at the main bar at the Breakfast Creek Hotel and at the Royal Hotel in Ingham and at the Larrikin Hotel in Bowen, is a pot. If you go in there and speak to the locals, there is just one thing they want—and that is a pot. I say to the member for South Brisbane: it ain't trendy inner Brisbane; it is where the real people are.

*(Time expired)*