




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNCILLOR COMPLAINTS) AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL
(IMPLEMENTING STAGE 1 OF BELCARRA) AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) (3.13 pm): I rise to support the bills before the House today. I am also very pleased to follow the member for Mermaid Beach in this debate.

A government member: Why?

Mr DICK: I am pleased to follow him because this is the same member who, when he was an assistant minister in the Newman government, had a material interest in the Skyrail development on the Gold Coast and sought to advocate for that project when he was an assistant minister in a Queensland state government. Can I begin my contribution—

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive and I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): Minister, the member has found your comments offensive; will you please withdraw them?

Mr DICK: I withdraw. After 10 minutes of unremitting lecture on the ethical nature of government from the member for Mermaid Beach, I can assure the people of Queensland that members on this side of the House will not be lectured to on integrity and ethical standards by the member for Mermaid Beach. There is no more essential or fragile component of our political process than the trust of the public in that system. Members of the Queensland community have an expectation that those they elect to represent them will govern solely in their interest. There is nothing more corrosive of that trust than the taint of corruption. Democracy is founded on government by, for and of the people. Queenslanders, quite rightly, are very intolerant of those who misuse the office with which they have been entrusted for personal gain.

A world where the democratic project is in retreat in a number of countries, polls reflecting falling levels of public confidence in our system of government—even in our own country—should be a great cause of concern. Those of us who hold public office must answer to the highest standards of probity and integrity. It is not just about accountability, but the weight that is attached to the privilege of public service. Despite the cynicism that is so often associated with it, public life is driven by a moral imperative. Unfortunately, those members of the LNP opposite continue to chug along in the ethical slow lane. They still cling, as we have seen in the press today, to the hope of a return to the days when a lazy \$10,000 could be dropped into an MP's account with no questions asked. There is no ideal to which they are more committed, no purpose about which they are more passionate, no cause for which they will fight harder, than what they regard as the central tenet of politics as they see it: the politician's right to secrecy.

What a shabby contrast the LNP make to the Palaszczuk government. It was this government under this Premier who reduced the level at which political donations must be declared from the \$12,500 limit instituted by Campbell Newman back to \$1,000. It was this government under this Premier who introduced the real-time declarations of donations made to political parties and their candidates. It was this government under this Premier who banned political donations from property developers. That is what genuine accountability looks like: laws that make a difference; laws that work to restore public confidence in the process; laws like the ones we are debating today, which yet again carry the signature of the party with a history of defending the public interest and fighting for the public good—the Australian Labor Party.

Corruption is to be deplored wherever it exists, but its impact is most sharply felt in those communities most reliant on the delivery of government services. I have the very great privilege of representing the people of Woodridge in this House. Woodridge is home to a vibrant and diverse community and it is among the most multicultural in the country. It also suffers more than its fair share of social and economic disadvantage, and I am passionate about ensuring that the public money expended on behalf of the people of my electorate goes to delivering the services they deserve. Corruption and the misuse of public money is more than just a criminal failure of character: it is a profound betrayal of public trust because it depletes the government's capacity to fairly deliver the services the public depends upon.

I conclude my contribution by commending the minister for bringing these bills to the House. These bills continue a long tradition of Labor governments in this state that deliver reform, which in turn delivers real improvements to our political process and genuine accountability for those who serve in it.