Speech By

David Janetzki

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

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LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

Mr JANETZKI (Toowoomba South—LNP) (3.27 pm): I am not quite sure whether that contribution from the member for Toohey was comedy or tragedy, because there was a significant gap—

Mr Crisafulli: A tragicomedy.

Mr JANETZKI: I take that interjection from the member for Broadwater. Let's call it a tragicomedy, because there were a few gaps in what the member for Toohey had to say about this particular report and the 2016-17 annual report of the Queensland Ombudsman.

I do agree with the member for Toohey that the Queensland Ombudsman plays a vital role in Queensland public life. The Queensland Ombudsman, which was an initiative of the Bjelke-Petersen government in 1974 to improve the relationship between administrative agencies and the citizens of Queensland, allows Queenslanders, if they are unhappy with an administrative decision that impacts on their lives, to make an application, make a request, to the Queensland Ombudsman. It serves a vital purpose and it has for a very long period of time. It is a place where people can lodge administrative complaints or requests. The Queensland Ombudsman also plays a vital educative role. It makes its way around Queensland advising Queensland citizens and agencies as to what they can and cannot do. That makes this report and its findings particularly important.

If we look into the report for 2016-17 we see that there are a couple of very disturbing trends. Mr Phil Clarke, with whom I have had the good fortune of spending some time learning about the Queensland Ombudsman's role and its purpose—he is a fine public servant doing a wonderful job—has identified a range of problems.

In 2016-17 reported wrongdoing in the public sector has skyrocketed—there is no other word for it—36 per cent. In 2016-17 reported complaints have increased by 36 per cent. Of greatest concern is that of 798 public interest disclosures—that is, reported wrongdoing in the public sector—53 per cent were about corrupt conduct. Why is that important? Because the Public Service serves the public interest. The numbers do not lie. The 2016-17 Queensland Ombudsman report goes on to say that state government departments ranked first in the number of public interest disclosures at 53 per cent followed by statutory authorities, local councils and then TAFEs. What can we glean from this report? We can glean from this report that, under Labor, corruption is getting worse and the government needs to explain why there are additional cases of maladministration around Queensland.

Dr Rowan: Look at Ipswich.

Mr JANETZKI: I take that interjection from the member for Moggill. I think the government needs to explain why there are increasing cases of misuse of public funds. You cannot help thinking that the fish rots from the head down and, in particular, I think about the member for Miller, who has been called very foolish by the chairman of the CCC in respect of his conduct of public affairs in this state—his

conduct of backchannelling emails in clear contravention. He should know better. The honourable minister should know better and should be conducting public affairs through the appropriate channels. I can see no other reason for this increase in maladministration—reported conduct to the Queensland Ombudsman—other than the fish rotting from the head down.

Dr Rowan: Labor at Ipswich.

Mr JANETZKI: I take that interjection from the member for Moggill: just look at Ipswich. The key issue that Mr Clarke identified in the Queensland Ombudsman report is that these increased reports ultimately cost the taxpayer, and I will use his words. Mr Clarke has said that corruption, maladministration and misuse of public resources increase the costs of providing public services, so there is not just an increase in corrupt activity being reported but there is an increased cost to the public of Queensland.

(Time expired)