



Speech By  
**Hon. Yvette D'Ath**


**MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE**

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Record of Proceedings, 6 September 2018

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Statutory Authorities, Appointments

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.51 am): It is with great pleasure that I can inform the House about appointments for significant statutory positions—positions that play important independent roles in our modern, open Queensland system of government. With the permission of the Governor, I can advise that today I will be seeking the Governor's approval for Mr Scott McDougall to be appointed as the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Commissioner and Mr Patrick Vidgen as Queensland's Electoral Commissioner.

Scott McDougall is a well-known and respected member of Queensland's legal community. He has dedicated his skills and experience to representing vulnerable Queenslanders as director and principal at Caxton Legal Centre, formerly president of Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services, and a volunteer across the CLC community. Importantly, Mr McDougall has demonstrated that his experience is not limited to representing any given client to the best of his ability but extends to considering the systemic and policy challenges facing Queenslanders, including those challenges relevant to government and public administration. He has contributed as founding director of Elder Abuse Australia, through the QLS access to justice committee, UQ's Pro Bono Centre advisory board and Legal Aid's first nations advisory committee. I wish him every success in the role and look forward to the team at Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland continuing to deliver in their important work.

I am also pleased that acting Electoral Commissioner Pat Vidgen is being recommended for permanent appointment. Pat Vidgen comes with an enviable reputation of delivering at senior levels of government and in corporate roles. Most recently he played a crucial role in the delivery of the successful Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. He has previously held senior roles in government, including in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Public Safety Business Agency. He also has extensive board experience, including South Bank Corporation, Events Queensland and the national counterterrorism committee. He is known as a person of integrity. Of course, that is exactly what we need in what has been a challenging time for staff at the ECQ. I am confident that Mr Vidgen can provide the leadership and stability that can support the ECQ staff and provide the public of Queensland with the confidence that the Electoral Commission is delivering its important work. I wish him and the staff at ECQ all the best as they continue to provide crucial services in their important independent role.

Respect for independent public institutions is vital to our democratic system. We as members of parliament have a particular responsibility to protect and respect independent institutions. I was disappointed to hear comments on ABC Radio from the member for Traeger that could only be considered as contemptuous of the Electoral Commission. Suggesting interference in the independent redistribution process is not just scandalous; it is also irresponsible. The Queensland Redistribution Commission was an independent body consisting of a respected retired judge, an experienced director-general and the Electoral Commissioner. It engaged in a process that is highly legislated, open

and transparent. Members of parliament and members of the community will always have differing opinions or suggestions about how redistributions should land. We know that because there were hundreds or thousands of submissions and comments made at the various stages of what is a very public process.

We are blessed in this state and in this country to have fair and free elections, the peaceful transfer of power at elections, an independent judiciary and a professional public service. As elected members of parliament we should do our part to promote respect and protect these important elements of our modern, fair and open democratic system. The allegations by the member for Traeger are unfounded and he should apologise for such comments.