




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) (3.54 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the *Oversight of the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman* report. I think the previous speaker, the member for Toohey, was negligent in a number of ways in terms of not really getting to the nub of what is in this report. This kind of report can often go unremarked and can often be forgotten.

I want to point out the seriousness of the content of this report. I am not sure this House really needs to hear how many people checked the Queensland Ombudsman website in the last 12 months. I think what is far more important for this House, which the member for Toohey has not gone anywhere near, is the number of people who are complaining, the number of public interest disclosures that are being made and the increases in various areas of serious complaints. I want to take the House to some of those complaints that are outlined in this report, which would possibly otherwise go unremarked and not commented on.

I turn firstly to the overall number of complaints. In the last 12 months there was a four per cent increase in the total number of complaints received about state agencies. That is up to 4,844 complaints. That relates to statutory authorities. State government departments also saw a two per cent increase in the number of complaints. The significant shift in the number of complaints to departments related to child and family services. Would members believe that there was a 24 per cent growth in complaints received by the Queensland Ombudsman about child and family services? That is something to remark on.

Over the past 12 months there have been significant complaints about the Public Trustee. What was the complaint increase for the Public Trustee? We saw a 14 per cent increase in the number of complaints received about statutory authorities and, of those complaints, the Public Trustee comprised 21 per cent. In fact, across the 12-month period there was a 17 per cent increase in complaints about the Public Trustee.

As we have seen in recent media reports, the Public Trustee is a growing concern for the people of Queensland. We have the biggest transfer of intergenerational wealth coming down the path for Queensland to address. We need a Public Trustee that is highly functioning and one that people can trust. Instead, we have seen the Public Trustee CEO suspended and senior staff walking out inexplicably. We have seen a significant growth in the number of complaints. I have written to the Queensland Ombudsman asking that he consider undertaking a report on the systemic challenges that are now being seen throughout the operation of the Public Trustee.

We are not looking at just one range of concerns; we are looking at overcharging on estates, claims of maladministration, claims of people, frankly—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr JANETZKI: I take that interjection—ripping money off people who should not be losing money. These are serious concerns. On the back of this report that saw a 17 per cent increase in complaints over the past 12 months, I look forward to the Queensland Ombudsman investigating this further at his earliest convenience.

I want to draw attention to public interest disclosures. The Queensland Ombudsman is the oversight agency for the Public Interest Disclosure Act. During the year, a total of 802 public interest disclosures were made and 73 per cent of that related to corrupt conduct.

Ms Bates: Should we be surprised under a Labor government?

Mr JANETZKI: Given the leadership from the top we should not be surprised. It is vitally important that all public administration is addressed with the highest level of integrity. The allegations that we have heard at the highest levels of government in this state, that kind of leadership—

Mr Bailey interjected.

Mr JANETZKI: I take that interjection from the very foolish member for Miller. It is important to note that a majority of these public interest disclosures were reported by state government departments. In the 12-month period, public interest disclosures by an employee of one public sector entity against another increased from 21 to 68. The fish rots from the head and Labor governments need to do more about it.