



Speech By  
**Jarrold Bleijie**


**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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Record of Proceedings, 17 October 2019

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Member for Toohey**

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (2.00 pm): Over the past few months we have seen a government absolutely engulfed in a spate of integrity scandals. We have seen Premier Palaszczuk with her head in the sand on those integrity issues. The weakest Premier in Queensland's history oversees the weakest government in Queensland's history. Labor members of parliament are continually breaking the integrity rules without consequence. In fact, when the Deputy Premier breaks the rules she is promoted to acting premier without consequence, other than losing Cross River Rail which she had lost three weeks earlier.

The latest integrity scandal engulfing the government involves the member for Toohey. The member for Toohey's explanation this week that he complied with the pecuniary interest rules is nonsense. Mentioning an additional income of an entire law firm is not acceptable. It has now been revealed that the member for Toohey's firm, Russo Lawyers, is a preferred supplier for Legal Aid Queensland. They refuse to tell us how much money Russo Lawyers is making from Legal Aid Queensland.

Two days ago the member for Toohey stood in this place and said that he has not acted as a Legal Aid lawyer whilst he has been a member of parliament. What he failed to say to the people of Queensland is that his firm has. He owns the firm. Is the member for Toohey saying that he has not derived an income from Russo Lawyers since being elected in 2015? If that is the case, he should explain himself. Why are the Attorney-General and the Premier unable to say how much money the member for Toohey's law firm has actually made?

The member for Toohey has failed to declare the total amount of income generated from Russo Lawyers acting as a Legal Aid firm. He invites members of parliament to a Legal Aid function without mentioning on the invitation that his firm receives money from Legal Aid. He debates legislation that directly impacts Legal Aid, but fails to declare under the standing orders his financial pecuniary interest in Russo Lawyers. At the estimates hearing he even asked questions of the CEO of Legal Aid, without declaring that he was the principal solicitor of Russo Lawyers.

This is very serious and so many questions remain unanswered that today I have written to the Speaker of the Parliament requesting the Speaker investigate this matter and refer the entirety of the matter—the member for Toohey, his law firm and alleged breaches of the standing orders—to the Ethics Committee. I table a copy of that correspondence and attachments.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 17 October 2019, from the member for Kawana, Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, to the Speaker, Hon. Curtis Pitt, regarding a referral to the Ethics Committee [1866](#).

The opposition will not rest until the member for Toohey explains how much money his firm has made from Legal Aid.