




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GAVEN

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ELECTORAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION (ACCOUNTABILITY, INTEGRITY AND OTHER MATTERS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (5.10 pm): I rise to support the Electoral and Other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity and Other Matters) Amendment Bill. It is pretty apparent that there is a declining level of trust that members of the public have for political institutions, and that is a great shame. It is a shame because the work that we do as legislators has the ability to make a profound impact on the lives of people whom we represent and it is critical and incumbent on all of us that in return for that responsibility we can provide trust—trust that we will not abandon our principles and our community in exchange for money from big donors.

I am disappointed to hear that I may be the only Gold Coast member of parliament voting for greater transparency and accountability, but I am not particularly surprised because the member for Bonney learnt his politics from working for people like Stuart Robert, the man behind the Fadden Forum controversy, and it was the Newman government that raised the threshold for the reporting of political donations to \$12,400 so that big donors were effectively kept secret from the community. It was our government that restored this threshold to \$1,000. We brought in real-time—

Mr Molhoek interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Pause the clock. Member for Southport, you were not in a chair. You will need to be in your chair if you make comments. Next time you will be warned under the standing orders.

Ms SCANLON: We brought in real-time political donations and banned property developer donations, both voted against by the LNP. Today we are adding to those measures by enhancing integrity and public accountability for elections. The proposed election funding and disclosure regime in this bill is intended to ensure that no single person or entity is able to improperly influence those involved in electoral campaigning for state elections by putting in place caps on political donations and on the electoral expenditure by registered political parties and their associated entities, candidates and third parties that campaign.

I think most people in our community are tolerant of the contest of ideas that happen during elections and in fact appreciative that we live in a country where everyone can participate in debate. What I do not think that people are appreciative of is that the voice of an aged-care worker, early childhood educator, cleaner, paramedic—the list goes on—can be drowned out by the likes of multimillionaires. I was interested to hear the member for Mermaid Beach yesterday claim that these changes allegedly increase power for Labor candidates, because this bill creates a level playing field. At the end of the day the member for Mermaid Beach has the same expenditure cap as any other Labor candidate running against him. If his admission is that the LNP needs more money to compensate for bad policy, then I suggest it goes back to the drawing board.

This bill also limits a candidate or registered political party to no more than two signs up to a specific size within 100 metres of a polling centre entry, meaning that there will not be a huge number of signs and bunting covering our schools that only go into the bin the next day—something that many

people in my community supported when I broached this on Facebook in September last year. This bill also creates two new offences in the Integrity Act 2009 and the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 applicable to cabinet ministers who behave dishonestly and with an intention to obtain a benefit for themselves or others or cause detriment to others.

It also amends the City of Brisbane Act and Local Government Act to introduce new offences that apply if a councillor dishonestly contravenes certain obligations in relation to conflicts of interest or a register of interests. These are all measures the LNP will be opposing if it does not support this bill. It is big on lecturing others but light on taking responsibility when it comes to actually supporting reform that strengthens accountability and integrity in this space. I commend this bill to the House.