




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 18 November 2021

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Office of the Independent Assessor

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (2.25 pm): It is disappointing that this Labor government only cares about how things look, not how they are. This government will only respond to something under the glare of the media or when the political problem becomes larger than the real problem at hand. Reported again this week is another overreach of the Office of the Independent Assessor. I have held reservations about how the OIA is functioning. I have raised the issue at estimates hearings and in the parliament. We see again the front page of the *Courier-Mail* refers to the case of Natalia Muszkat of Gladstone Regional Council—referred to the OIA for allegedly blocking racial abuse through social media.

The Office of the Independent Assessor is the integrity body established by the Palaszczuk Labor government to ensure trust and integrity in the local government sector. Equally, transparency and accountability are qualities that need to be demonstrated by integrity bodies.

I wish to inform the House of the concerns I have received from a councillor in relation to the answers to the questions on notice that were published in response to a briefing provided by the OIA to the parliamentary State Development and Regional Industries Committee. Questions Nos 3 and 4 related specifically to the self-initiated investigations of the OIA, its own-motions. A councillor has contacted me who has been subjected to two self-initiated—own-motion—investigations, which were subsequently referred to the Councillor Conduct Tribunal, with one being dismissed and the other recommending training. I table a copy of the Councillor Conduct Tribunal responses published on 30 June 2021.

Tabled paper. Document, undated, titled 'Councillor Conduct Tribunal: Councillor misconduct complaint—summary of decision and reasons for department's website' [1969](#).

The questions on notice were specific and encompassing. Neither of the answers from the OIA reference this councillor's cases, despite questions specifically requesting this information. It is an omission and disappointing from an integrity body that is tasked with investigating non-disclosure of mayors and councillors. In this instance, I believe the OIA has not met the standards that it expects of others—the standards it expects of mayors and councillors. I am concerned, as is the councillor, that the members of the parliamentary committee have not been provided with full disclosure by the Office of the Independent Assessor. I will be writing to the committee with my concerns and how the omissions in the answers are misleading given the information is already published and available.