



Speech By  
**Ann Leahy**


**MEMBER FOR WARREGO**

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Record of Proceedings, 12 May 2022

## **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT**

### **Local Government Electoral Expenditure**

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (2.31 pm): The release of the discussion paper on local government electoral expenditure caps is another Labor inspired reform which sadly politicises the local government sector. This Labor government is back at it trying to rig the local government electoral process. Labor did not succeed with changing the voting system or undemocratically appointing the runners-up after resignations so now they are back on the rigging game, with unfair campaign electoral expenditure caps.

While mayors and councillors will have their campaign spending significantly capped, the unions will be able to pour millions of dollars, completely unchecked, into any community they like. Mayoral or council candidates will be forced to fight for their beliefs under the caps. However, under this proposal Labor and the cashed-up unions will be allowed to play by their own rules, creating an unfair distortion as third parties. The third party, or the 'unions spending cap' as we could refer to it, can be applied flexibly across all local government areas. This means while council candidates must spend solely within their nominated area, Labor and the unions can funnel all their money into one council area.

Council elections need to be fair, and this proposal allows for far too much influence from the Labor Party and their union mates. Unions could pool their funds. They could spend it all in, say, Aurukun; however, I suspect they will not. It will be pooled for the Brisbane City Council mayoral election, creating an unfair distortion. Adrian Schrinner could only spend \$250,000 to run for Lord Mayor of Brisbane. Under this proposal that has been put forward by Labor, just one union could spend over \$3.8 million in the same campaign.

There are 26 registered unions in Queensland, all of which would be given the capacity to spend their pooled caps in just one local council election. Any mayor in Queensland could be outspent by 400 to 1 under the proposal in the discussion paper. At no point does the Crime and Corruption Commission's Belcarra report suggest that Labor and the unions should be able to outspend a mayoral candidate by 400 to 1. Labor's proposal distorts the fairness, the transparency and the accountability in local government elections. It is blatant rigging of the local government electoral process and a politicisation of local government.

The Palaszczuk Labor government will try anything to rig council elections. They tried it before and they are at it again. This third-term Labor government is without shame. Their corruption has no place in this state.