




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 22 February 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Integrity in Government, Review

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.51 am): Last week I announced a wideranging review into the culture and accountability of the state's public sector. It covers six key areas including: the culture of the Public Service, ensuring ethical decision-making and impartial advice; the nature of interactions between integrity bodies, the Public Service and the executive; legislation underpinning the existing ethics and integrity framework; the adequacy of systems; ethics training; and the timeliness of processes to resolve ethical and integrity complaints.

The inquiry will be conducted by Professor Peter Coaldrake AO. For 14 years Professor Coaldrake was vice-chancellor of the Queensland University of Technology. Currently he is the Chief Commissioner of the federal government appointed Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency. Previously he had been appointed by the then LNP government to conduct the 2013 Open Government Policy Forum and the strategic review of the functions of the Office of the Integrity Commissioner. Professor Coaldrake is a fitting person to conduct the review that I announced on Friday. I believe such a review is healthy and timely. Professor Coaldrake has very wide terms of reference and the ability to make whatever recommendation he sees fit. I will receive an interim report in two months and a final report in four months. Both will be made public and all recommendations will be adopted in full.

There are other issues that have been raised in relation to the Integrity Commissioner and the former state archivist. There are limits on what I can say about those matters. In this state we follow the rules: we do not comment on court cases before they are finalised. Likewise, I am not free to comment on matters currently under investigation by the proper authorities. Since the Fitzgerald inquiry, Queensland has had robust institutions to guard against corruption. One is the CCC. It is a standing royal commission in this state. The other is our parliamentary committees.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I am sorry, Premier. Members, I would like to hear the ministerial statement.

Ms PALASZCZUK: These committees are bipartisan and they do good work, most notably recently to do with voluntary assisted dying and an investigation into serious allegations surrounding the Logan council. They are constantly privy to confidential information. It is simply not fair to discuss publicly matters before a committee before they are fully considered.

It is incumbent on us, as members of parliament, to defend those institutions. Undermining and destroying them does not lead to greater transparency and accountability; it leads to less.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members are reminded that comments will be directed through the chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let me quote—

There were errors in policy and political judgement ... such as changes to government committees
the institutions of state must be respected

and—

corruption and lack of accountability will not be tolerated

Those words ought to be familiar to members opposite. They are from the Borbidge-Sheldon review into how the LNP lost the 2015 election. Interfering with the CCC, the Supreme Court, truncating estimates hearings from two weeks to two days and sacking the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee in the dead of night: voters noticed and they cared. Those are not allegations; it is what the LNP does in government and many of those who did that are still here.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I am sorry, Premier. Members to my left, I want to be clear: standing orders have not changed over the break. I want to make sure that that statement is made clear to all members of the House. Premier, do you have anything further to add?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I do, Mr Speaker. I will conclude with another quote—

The demand for my service during my tenure has primarily been due to the government's preparedness to adopt a higher standard of ethics and integrity.

It is a credit to you as Premier that the standard which applies to ministers and assistant ministers are of the highest calibre in terms of ethics and integrity.

That letter was written to me a month ago and it was signed 'Nikola Stepanov, Queensland Integrity Commissioner'.