




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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INTEGRITY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

PUBLIC SECTOR BILL

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.40 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak to the cognate debate this evening. As we know, this bill is the first tranche of legislation in response to Professor Peter Coaldrake's report titled *Let the sunshine in* and Kevin Yearbury's 2021 report titled *Strategic review of the Integrity Commissioner's functions*. We know that the main purpose of this bill is to strengthen and enhance the independence of key Queensland integrity bodies, including: the Queensland Auditor-General, the Queensland Audit Office and the Queensland Integrity Commissioner. The bill also provides more transparency as to who may obtain Integrity Commissioner advice. The bill also amends declaration of interest requirements and strengthens the regulation of lobbyists by introducing an offence for unregistered lobbying under the Integrity Act 2009.

The bill also reduces the strategic time frame for the Ombudsman from seven to five years, bringing strategic review time frames in line with other integrity bodies. These changes are largely considered uncontroversial, as reflected by the general support from the committee. They are largely supported by the bodies they impact, and their funding and policy implications for government are fairly minor. We know that the government continues to work on implementing Professor Coaldrake's and Mr Yearbury's other recommendations, noting that many of these recommendations do not require legislative action.

I think we can all agree that the passage of this bill will enhance the independence of Queensland's integrity bodies, and this is paramount. I reflect on the role that we as parliamentarians have to play in the community more broadly in ensuring that our community has faith in our state's integrity bodies. It goes without saying that it is absolutely paramount our community, Queenslanders, have high regard for our integrity bodies and that they feel they can trust them to carry out the work they have been charged to do.

The original Fitzgerald report recommended that the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee be chaired by a member of the opposition or not a member of the government to provide additional safeguards. This is just part of the original Fitzgerald report, and it clearly identifies the importance of upholding trust and respect in our integrity bodies. To be clear, I am referring to the original Fitzgerald report. That is why it was so disappointing to hear those opposite repeatedly ask, 'What is on the laptop?', while there was a CCC investigation ongoing. We had countless press conferences, we had references to integrity infernos and we had question after question in question time. You would think they would be keen to update the good people of Queensland about what in fact was on the laptop.

Mr Hart: Exactly. What was on the laptop?

Ms PUGH: The CCC handed down a report. It is only about 20 pages long, for anybody who is interested in reading it. I certainly have. Queenslanders got their answer and the answer was: nothing. I will read directly from the report, member for Burleigh—

In relation to those three matters, the CCC's investigation concluded that:

- There was no evidence of improper disclosure.
- The circumstances in which the laptops were retrieved from the Integrity Commissioner's office were entirely ordinary, and the descriptions of 'raid' and 'seizure' do not reflect the reality of what occurred. Further, the circumstances in which one laptop was 'wiped' are wholly unremarkable.

The conclusion states—

Two laptops were collected on 12 March 2021. The Executive Officer's laptop was collected for a different purpose to the Director's laptop.

The Executive Officer's laptop had been in the Integrity Commissioner's office for four months prior to it being retrieved and reimaged. It had been used during that time by the Integrity Commissioner.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PUGH: Those opposite do not want to hear it, but I am happy to read directly from the report because Queenslanders deserve to know. It continues—

The Executive Officer's laptop was reimaged so that it could be reallocated to a new staffer.

Oh, a smoking gun! The report goes on—

While the reimaging gave rise to a risk that relevant records may have been lost, the backup processes employed meant that this risk was relatively small. Further, nothing has occurred since to suggest that risk materialised.

In light of the above, the commentary which has suggested that laptops were 'seized' and 'wiped' as a result of a 'raid' on the Integrity Commissioner's offices is, in the CCC's view, a mischaracterisation of what occurred.

That is a direct quote from the CCC's report on Investigation Workshop. What was on the laptop? Nothing. The laptop was taken for a routine repurposing. There was no raid as characterised by the LNP—just a reassignment of a workplace device. Since this time we have heard crickets from those opposite about what was on the laptop because they have been caught out. They should stand up, they should tell the truth and they should apologise, because the facts are simple. There was nothing on the laptop and those opposite know it. I commend the bills to the House.