



Speech By  
**Jonty Bush**


**MEMBER FOR COOPER**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2022

**MOTION**

**Office of the Integrity Commissioner**

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (5.35 pm): I rise to oppose the motion moved by the member for Maroochydore and support the amendment moved by the Attorney-General. When it comes to the issue of integrity there is a really well-worn saying that I am sure we are all familiar with: integrity is doing the right thing when nobody is watching, but for reasons I may never understand, those opposite work in complete contrast to this sentiment. Not only do they not do the right thing when nobody is watching but they do the wrong thing when everybody is watching. Let us look at their track record on integrity. I will start with the most recent estimates process which illustrates their disregard for the systems of integrity in our political processes. In the lead-up to estimates the LNP were fairly consistent in arguing that they ought to be afforded adequate time to scrutinise ministers and senior public servants. Maybe I should not say this, but I completely agree with them. They should have time to hold the government to account. It is this necessary tension that creates good government and creates a public service that serves Queenslanders.

The Legal Affairs and Safety Committee that I am proudly a part of ensured that the opposition were, in fact, allocated a majority of the time during the estimates process. But I have to say I was genuinely taken aback by the shallow nature in which the opposition explored many of the big issues across Queensland's justice system. They were all over the place. Members were on their phones, they were whispering, walking in and out and continuing to focus on areas that were outside of government priorities and programs. To publicly decry the lack of time allocated and then to not use the time allocated to its fullest advantage does not sound like acting with integrity to me. But, okay, that is how they act when they are in opposition so I will cut them a little bit of slack. Surely when they were in government they acted honourably. Well, computer says no. I literally googled, 'Does the LNP have integrity?', and it came back, 'No.' That is not to say that when they were in government they did not do much, they achieved a lot. They sacked 14,000 public servants, cutting services delivered by some of their most experienced and capable people. They stood down entire teams, programs, units and divisions, many of which had been building industry relationships for decades. Many had been evaluated and proven to work. It did not matter; they were wound up.

What is really concerning is the approach they took to Queensland's political regulatory framework. We have already heard today how they sacked the PCMC late into a parliamentary sittings evening. Their reason? They did not like how the committee was monitoring and reporting on the CMC at the time. But wait, is not the point of a parliamentary oversight committee to provide oversight? The sacking of the PCMC was a remarkable event, unprecedented in Australian political history at the time. But do not take my word for it. Political analyst Paul Williams said the mass sacking was a remarkable event, unprecedented in Australian political history at the time. He described it as testing the boundaries of democracy.

This is a party that has voted against every Palaszczuk government integrity measure that has been put up: real-time disclosure laws, computer says no; property developer donation ban, computer says no; electorate expenditure and donation cap laws, computer says no. Not only does this motion demonstrate their duplicity, but it demonstrates they are out of their depth. It is clear that those opposite do not understand parliamentary process or integrity. It is clear that those opposite just want to come in here and stir things up when the matters they are referring to are already before the appropriate bodies. The Fitzgerald inquiry was a watershed moment for Queensland. It introduced improved administrative structures, governance and systems for our state. It highlighted the importance of the separation of powers under the Westminster system and now those opposite are wanting to erode those systems under the guise of greater integrity. It would be funny if it was not so serious.

This week we heard the Premier say that she acted on Solicitor-General advice and referred certain matters to the appropriate bodies upon receiving that advice. She did that because our Premier respects the institutions of the parliament and the law. That is the appropriate thing to do, it is the prudent thing to do and it is what should be done. To argue for something less than that response is inappropriate. Those opposite now come in here wanting the Legislative Assembly to interfere with the committee process—a process set up to scrutinise legislation and other matters; a committee system introduced and set up by a Labor government. Those opposite should be ashamed. There is a convention that when matters are referred to a committee they are considered by the committee and the committee reports back. I say to those opposite: let the committee do its job.