



Speech By  
**Kim Richards**


**MEMBER FOR REDLANDS**

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**INTEGRITY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**PUBLIC SECTOR BILL**

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (12.54 pm): That is interesting. Those opposite have talked about debate time today but they are not even organised enough to get their next speaker up on their feet. Honestly, it is shocking.

**Ms Grace:** All talk, no action.

**Ms RICHARDS:** Exactly. I take that interjection from the Minister for Education. I rise to speak in the Integrity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 and Public Sector Bill 2022 cognate debate. I have listened to the contributions of those on the other side of the House. Quite frankly, the audaciousness and hypocrisy is absolutely rife. They are trying to lecture us, but their track record is really embarrassing. Queenslanders know what that looks like. They have experienced it and they have not forgotten it.

The Leader of the Opposition, who was a member of the Newman government cabinet, the member for Kawana and quite a number of other members opposite talk about integrity, accountability and supporting the public sector. Goodness gracious me! Queenslanders know what they did when they were in government. They will not talk about sacking the PCCC in the middle of the night and that fundamental attack on democracy. They will not talk about axing 26 staff from the Crime and Misconduct Commission. They will not talk about cutting the estimates schedule back to two days. I remember the member for Broadwater's contribution criticising the estimates process and the scrutiny process. He was at the cabinet table when the Newman government brought it back to two days. You cannot make this up. It is unbelievable.

They will not talk about the 14,000 public servants. I still go up to the Redlands Research Facility and talk to Larry and the guys up there. They have not forgotten. The staff at the Alexandra Hills TAFE have not forgotten. The nurses have not forgotten. They talk about having the backs of the workers in the public sector, but their track record is very clear.

Those opposite have form when they talk about attacks on the Integrity Commissioner. They have just replayed that live and large here today in the chamber with the attack on the appointment of the new Integrity Commissioner. In the light of her CV, that behaviour from those opposite is embarrassing and they should be ashamed of themselves. Their form continues. Let's talk about Mr Solomon. Honestly, it is embarrassing. They do not want to talk about the Newman gag orders, but they have the audacity to speak of fear in this place. My goodness gracious me! Again, I point to their track order and form.


The member for Gympie said, 'Oh, the stench of lobbyists.' Goodness gracious me! They do not want to talk about the involvement with lobbyists of ex-Liberal leader Bruce Flegg, the then minister for housing and public works. They will not talk about the Carmody appointment. They will not talk about the relaxed donation laws. They want to talk about integrity, but they do not want to talk about what they did whilst they were in government. That is very clear.

They do not want to talk about the misinformation they spread when it comes to the laptop. There is a report here that is very clear. They know what they have done. They just tried to whip up an insane media frenzy on misinformation. They should apologise to Queenslanders for that. It diminishes confidence in our democracy and our parliament. They really should apologise for that. Instead, they try to rewrite history and rewrite their track record. It is interesting that the Newman government never had a minister for integrity back in the day. I wonder why that is. When you talk about the 17 members who sit on that side of the chamber—honestly!

In stark contrast is the Palaszczuk government, which is consistently working to improve and deliver on reforms that promote transparency, accountability and integrity. Queenslanders know what is inherently in the LNP's DNA. Let's talk about their debt reduction strategy. God help us if that was ever to play out, because I think every Queenslander knows what that means. It is absolutely frightening. We can talk about the Joh Bjelke-Petersen days, the Borbidge days or the Newman days. Heaven forbid we forget about the Morrison government! The former prime minister has been sanctioned for creating all of these special positions for himself. That is what is in the LNP's DNA. Those opposite talk about ICACs and integrity—well, gee-whiz! I am talking about the LNP's DNA. As I said, I think the track record of all of those governments tells a very clear story. I think they should feel quite embarrassed.

We on this side of the House will not let Queenslanders down. We know that Queenslanders expect and deserve their government to provide public services in a transparent and accountable way. Our Palaszczuk government is committed to strengthening our integrity and oversight frameworks so that they are contemporary and maintain and improve the culture of accountability. The bill is the first tranche of amendments that demonstrate our commitment to these reforms. They will implement some of the recommendations of Professor Coaldrake's report titled *Let the sunshine in: review of culture and accountability in the Queensland public sector*—

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 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (2.01 pm), continuing: I am quick to my feet, unlike those opposite today. This bill is the first tranche of amendments that demonstrates our commitment. These reforms implement some of the recommendations of Professor Peter Coaldrake's report titled *Let the sunshine in: review of culture and accountability in the Queensland public sector* and Kevin Yearbury's *Strategic review of the Integrity Commissioner's functions*. Let me tell honourable members again that this legislation and the work done by Professor Coaldrake and Mr Yearbury to let the sunshine in are in stark contrast to those on the other sides, whose track record was to let the storm clouds roll in during their time in government and to bring down the roller shutter door on government.

The main purpose of this bill is to strengthen the independence of the Auditor-General, the Audit Office and the Queensland Integrity Commissioner. The bill also brings transparency and clarity for those who want to obtain advice from the Integrity Commissioner. It amends the declaration of interest requirements and strengthens the regulation of lobbyists by introducing an offence for unregulated lobbying under the Integrity Act 2009.

The bill makes the Auditor-General an independent officer of the parliament. As such, the Auditor-General and Deputy Auditor-General will be required to take an oath administered by the Speaker or the Clerk. It also gives the Auditor-General greater control over the resources utilised by the Queensland Audit Office. The bill will allow the Auditor-General to perform an audit of government owned corporations. The Auditor-General may also audit the financial administration of public sector entities if requested by the Legislative Assembly.

As has been articulated by many others in their contributions to this debate, this bill represents a significant effort to develop and modernise our public sector employment legislation, implementing the recommendations of the Bridgman review of the public sector employment laws, *A fair and responsive public service for all*. It discharges the primary Bridgman review recommendation of a new public sector act with broad application to the public sector. This includes the core Public Service as well as statutory bodies and other entities not currently captured by the Public Service Act. The bill is also informed by recent developments in public administration and other developments post the Bridgman review that include consideration of the recent public sector legislative reforms in other jurisdictions such as New Zealand and the lessons they have learnt in the way in which the Public Service can be supported.

With regard to the workplace health and safety considerations in terms of recruitment and selection, the bill requires the chief executives to promote and support a culture of respect and inclusion. This includes a culture where all employees feel safe in their workplace. It also provides that managers must undertake best practice human resource management. Public sector employees work in a broad

range of roles and in some very challenging work environments, from frontline responders to fires and natural disasters, security guards, as we saw today in this chamber—and what a disgrace it was for all of us to witness what went on in the gallery today.

**Mrs Gilbert:** Shame!

**Ms RICHARDS:** It was a shame. Public sector employees include our emergency department workers in our hospitals, rangers and Boating and Fisheries Patrol inspectors who face a range of physical hazards and demands on the job as well as those who deal with significant emotional trauma such as in child safety. In framing the recruitment and selection process as choosing the person best suited to the position, it is important to understand the requirements of the position and the ability of each applicant to meet those requirements and to perform the role in a way that keeps them and their co-workers safe. That will be a requirement of the person who is responsible for managing the recruitment process.

The passage of these bills will support the extension of principles of fairness and responsiveness beyond the Public Service to employees within Queensland's broader public sector and it is critical to meeting the government's commitment to reforming the state's public sector employment laws. Our Palaszczuk government will always work hard for Queenslanders, and our track record on this side absolutely demonstrates that. When we talk about integrity, we know who is working on the side of delivering integrity, transparency and accountability across Queensland for all Queenslanders. As I said earlier in my contribution, that is in very stark contrast to the LNP governments that we have seen previously here in Queensland and also the Morrison government. Again, I hope members have had a chance to review the news articles on that today. It is shameful that the LNP have backed in that type of deception. How do you appoint yourself—

**Mr McCallum:** The first PM in history.

**Ms RICHARDS:** He was the first PM in history to be censured. It is in the LNP's DNA to act in that way. It is absolutely shameful. As I said, it does not matter if it was the Joh Bjelke-Petersen days, the Borbidge days, the Newman days or the Morrison days; it is in the LNP's DNA to behave in a way that does not support all Queenslanders. I commend this bill to the House.