




Speech By
Linus Power

MEMBER FOR LOGAN

Record of Proceedings, 18 August 2022

ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (3.46 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the Economics and Governance Committee Report No. 26, 57th Parliament, *Inquiry into the report on the strategic review of the functions of the Integrity Commissioner*, tabled on 3 June 2022.

I rise to take note of the Economics and Governance Committee's report into the statutory review undertaken into the functions of the Integrity Commissioner by Mr Kevin Yearbury. The committee supports and endorses the recommendations of the Yearbury report as sensible, steady improvements to the role of the Integrity Commissioner. We note that the role of the Integrity Commissioner is primarily a role of integrity adviser to MPs and other designated persons. This act sets out these functions clearly to give written advice on ethics and integrity issues in writing to defined designated persons, and also to meet with and give advice to members of the Legislative Assembly on interests and ethics issues.

MPs used to, before the creation of this role, seek out a personal lawyer for this type of advice. This role provides a consistent and experienced source of advice which I know many members value. It is also to keep the lobbyists register and, finally, to raise public awareness of ethics and integrity by contributing to public discussion of ethics issues.

The process of review and timing is defined in legislation and Mr Yearbury was, by statute, asked to review the performance of the functions I mentioned to see that they are performed economically, effectively and efficiently, and to examine the structural and operational aspects of the Integrity Commission and its relationship with public sector entities, ministers, members of the Legislative Assembly and the Economics and Governance Committee. We thank Mr Yearbury for this work and the way in which he diligently conducted an independent review. Mr Yearbury made 27 recommendations which the committee supports. Mr Yearbury's recommendations are careful and incremental, and they deserve the support of this House.

I recognise that all the members of the committee, especially the deputy chair, followed Mr Yearbury's lead to be constructive about this process, and they were both positive and productive in supporting the whole report. This is in stark contrast to some of the opposition frontbench who have shown a distinct lack of integrity regarding this important office. No-one forgets that the member for Maroochydore badgered the previous integrity commissioner by insisting that they were being investigated, despite it being repeatedly denied by the commissioner and with no basis in fact. This is a consistent pattern from the opposition, to undermine and attack this important role. We saw this again at the last estimates where the member for Maroochydore once again continued to insist on 'false facts' to undermine and accuse the current Acting Integrity Commissioner in what I think is a truly disgraceful manner.

This is a highly respected independent public servant who, of course, had senior roles in the Newman LNP government and did not deserve this disgraceful behaviour. However, this is a pattern of behaviour by the LNP. They show no integrity whatsoever nor care or concern over wild and baseless

claims on these issues. They do not care and they run out these accusations fully knowing the committee or the relevant minister is unable to answer these false charges and so then they are reported. However, I note that journalists are beginning to feel betrayed by the LNP's wild and baseless accusations.

This is never more true than in the disgraceful attacks led by the misleading troika of the members for Broadwater, Kawana and Maroochydore. They are a troika of confusion and misinformation. I use those words specifically because they are a quote. They disgracefully made lurid and false accusations of a 'seized' laptop in a 'raid'. Those words are not accurate. Those were the quotes that were misleading. They knew that this referral to the CCC would generate the headlines they wanted and leave a proper government which did the right thing to simply answer that the CCC should be left to do their job. Of course, none of these accusations was found to be true and the events were described by the CCC as 'wholly unremarkable'.

The CCC found these baseless accusations so damaging in eroding public confidence they felt duty bound to create a public report into their investigations. They stated clearly that the accusations orchestrated by the LNP were 'misinformation' and with 'no evidence'. People should all turn to the summary of the public report where they said there was no evidence of improper disclosure; the circumstances were not a raid or a seizure, but were entirely 'unremarkable'; and there was no evidence the laptops were wiped.

Ms Pease: Did we hear an apology?

Mr POWER: We have not yet.

I endorse the EGC's report to improve aspects of the role of the Integrity Commissioner. I cannot endorse the disgraceful behaviour of the LNP—apart from members of the EGC, who worked so hard—during this process. They have been caught out by the CCC report.