



Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**


**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

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Record of Proceedings, 18 August 2022

**ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (3.51 pm): In speaking to this report titled *Inquiry into the report on the strategic review of the functions of the Integrity Commissioner*, I am very pleased that a very respected public servant in Mr Kevin Yearbury has covered very important aspects of the role of the Integrity Commissioner. I say to the House that I have used the Integrity Commissioner myself on three occasions from memory for vital advice which I followed to the absolute letter in this House.

The Integrity Commissioner's role is a very important one in our new, modern parliament. I support the work that Mr Yearbury did 100 per cent. He was very communicative with the EGC. He did not address some of the matters that we would have liked him to address. However, that was his decision in relation to this report. He has come back with a report that should be adopted by this government and this parliament.

The report contained some unfortunate pieces in terms of some of the words that the former integrity commissioner herself articulated in relation to her role. It is extremely important that the role be maintained on an independent basis. Quite clearly through some of her proclamations, the former integrity commissioner's office, resources, assets and phone records are matters of great concern to her. She articulated this in several instances. Basically, we cannot have a repeat of that situation.

One of the recommendations from Mr Yearbury's report is that that office be staffed and funded as an independent body to keep it at arm's length from the government and the Public Service. We would like to see those recommendations being adopted as quickly as possible when we formally get a brand new Integrity Commissioner. As I understand it we have an acting Integrity Commissioner at this time. It is imperative that that office remain free from influence.

We know that the influence of lobbyists concerned the previous integrity commissioner, particularly the lobbyists that ensconced themselves in the so-called tower of power during the election period. It was unfortunate that matters of her investigative powers and her noting of the Register of Lobbyists and their activities were of concern. Perhaps we need to look at those sorts of matters. We do understand there has been some movement by the Premier of lobbyists away from particular roles that they may or may not have had in the future, but that was not the case that worried the former integrity commissioner and that has brought about a very unedifying outcome for the role of the Integrity Commissioner in the 57th Parliament.

We endorse completely the recommendations made by Mr Yearbury in relation to this report. We look forward to an Integrity Commissioner being put in place as soon as possible. Of course, there will be reference made to the EGC in relation to that role. However, we have no particular role in actually choosing the new Integrity Commissioner.

**Mr Krause** interjected.

**Mr STEVENS:** Our responsibilities are very limited. I take the suggestions from the PCCC chairman and member for Scenic Rim that it may well be a proper role for—and the Clerk also mentioned it in his speech on the Parliamentary Service—that should be further transferred across to the EGC—

**Mr Krause:** And Coaldrake.

**Mr STEVENS:**—and the Coaldrake report; I take that interjection as well. It may well be a better manner of ensuring the independence of that particular role. That is a very important outcome for this parliament and parliaments to come. I value the Integrity Commissioner's position. I follow the Integrity Commissioner's position. Everyone else in this parliament should adhere to the directions they give.