



Speech By  
**Ros Bates**


**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

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Record of Proceedings, 29 March 2022

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Integrity in Government**

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.17 pm): I am not going to be bullied by misogynous bullies from the other side of the House.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order.

**Mr DICK:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at those words and I ask the member for Mudgeeraba to please withdraw them.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I have previously indicated I will take points of order in silence. I will start warning people and I will start asking people to leave the chamber if that behaviour continues. I will take some advice and I expect silence while I am taking that advice. The member has taken personal offence and I ask you to withdraw.

**Ms BATES:** I withdraw.

When governments give up on governing with integrity they give up on governing for you. It becomes more about governing for their mates, and it should never be about that. Governing is a privilege, but, now in its third term, this government seems to have forgotten that. When that happens important things begin to drift. Things drift so badly that the government begins to lose control of basic services, and we all know that this state government is losing control of Queensland Health.

I want to address the appointment of Shaun Drummond to act as the director-general of Queensland Health. Revelations have today shown that Mr Drummond is currently under investigation by the Crime and Corruption Commission. Let's consider that for a moment. The government has chosen to appoint someone who is under investigation by the state's corruption watchdog because he is suspected of corrupt conduct to act in the position of Queensland Health's director-general. You cannot make this stuff up. This is not some minor appointment. This is the most senior bureaucrat in Queensland Health who is tasked with ensuring that our health system runs safely and efficiently. This is the director-general of the portfolio which has the largest budget of any Queensland government department.

Just when you think that the Queensland government's integrity inferno could not burn any hotter, here we go. Mr Drummond is alleged to have bankrolled a private defamation action launched by four psychiatrists with Metro North's cash—public money, taxpayers' money. It is also alleged that Mr Drummond did this without seeking the approval of the then attorney-general. That is a check and balance which is rightly required but seems to have been conveniently missed on this occasion. What is more, this defamation action was taken against a disability pensioner over a blog post. I raised this issue back in February 2020 when interviewed by the ABC. I said back then that it was just disgusting. I weighed in on the Metro North scandal saying at the time—

The fact that taxpayers are funding to sue a former patient is just disgusting. Health bosses should be investigating patient complaints, not suing patients when they come forward to make these complaints.

Is that overkill? I will let Queenslanders be the judge.

The then attorney-general who was never consulted about the defamation case is, of course, now the Minister for Health. It is the same minister who Shaun Drummond, as acting director-general, now reports to. It should be noted that it was the health minister who appointed Mr Drummond to a newly minted position of Queensland Health's chief operating officer, a position that never existed before and one which reports directly to the minister. That sounds kind of like a director-general, doesn't it? How do you think that made the former director-general feel? Make no bones about it: Dr John Wakefield had the rug pulled out from underneath him in a very public fashion—so much so that those opposite shouted it from the rooftops. His authority was immediately compromised given the new role and, sure enough, he is now gone. A crystal ball was hardly required to see that one coming.

There are also questions over Mr Drummond's links to Deloitte, where he took up a position as a partner in the middle of last year. Public reports say that he is on a leave of absence from that position while he works for Queensland Health. Queensland Health, of course, would be a significant client of Deloitte, so how is that situation being juggled? How can he make decisions when a conflict of interest may exist? The issue has been canvassed with the state's Integrity Commissioner. I hope another laptop will not go missing if the Integrity Commissioner's advice does not fall the way the government would like it to! That is exactly what happened last time, isn't it? Maybe there will be more backgrounding done against the commissioner by the Premier's office. Who knows? This is the Queensland we now live in.

Given the integrity clouds closing in on Mr Drummond, the opposition is today questioning whether it is appropriate that he acts as director-general. The opposition believes that until these allegations have been appropriately investigated and then dismissed it is not proper for Mr Drummond to act as director-general. We know that an integrity inferno has ripped right through the government. Now we learn that Queensland Health has not been spared. We cannot have this hanging over our health system. Ramping across the state remains at highs we have not seen before. Some patients are waiting eight hours before they are off-loaded and treatment begins. We need Queensland Health's leadership to be solely focused on trying to fix the crisis at hand. We do not need another integrity distraction like this.