




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NOOSA

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ADJOURNMENT

Public Sector Reform

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (6.22 pm): With the recent release of the Queensland Audit Office report on the performance of the Public Service, which reinforced some of Professor Coaldrake's findings, it is vital this is not relegated to the 'chamber scream'. Instead, we must strive for a collaborative agreement on how our departments can make the improvements required.

I have previously raised the issue of the inability of government to identify emerging risks or to respond in a timely fashion when MPs bring forward issues that must be addressed before they lead to even bigger issues, headlines or fatalities. Just two examples within my own electorate include efforts to address the volume of visitors to Teewah North Shore Beach in the Great Sandy National Park, which has been unsustainable for years. Recommendations four years ago from the Cooloola Teewah working group which would have addressed the issue are still unrealised. Added to that is the desperate need for integrated IT systems between QPWS and QPS as part of the management of the ever-increasing dangerous behaviours and outstanding overarching strategies such as the Cooloola Recreational and Great Sandy plans which are outdated—one by decades. Daily we see the ramifications of these delays and inaction. Another issue known for years was under-utilised social housing. Nothing has been done to provide our agencies with enough one-bedroom units to free up family-sized homes, which would have lessened the impact of the housing crisis as well as alleviated the strain on our frontline staff.

When I first became an MP I outlined the cost to everyday Queenslanders, public servants, communities, businesses and our future when governments are slow to act. Waiting until an issue is front page news is expensive, reactive, stressful and unsustainable. The question is what mechanism exists to ensure that information from frontline staff and agencies turns into action and what are the barriers? Is it a lack of funds, monitoring, independent assessment or will? Who is ultimately responsible for ensuring this action as well as efficiency, foresight, innovation and sustainability in the Queensland Public Service?

The Public Service Commission is responsible for building a highly capable and responsive public sector workforce. Is that where we need to start? Ultimately, every Queenslanders is a stakeholder in this. May the government response to the Audit Office report deliver answers and create a Public Service that rewards innovation, efficiency and efforts by public servants and Queenslanders to resolve issues before they become crises. As much as I am loath to suggest a full analysis, I am not sure how else we can move beyond what has, and is being, experienced. Whichever way is undertaken, it must be supported by all in this chamber and not utilised as 'scream fodder'.