




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

State Archivist, Annual Reports

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.06 am): On Friday, 4 March we received Mr John McKenna QC's report into allegations made by the former state archivist, Mr Mike Summerell. The former state archivist made some concerning allegations regarding the drafting processes of annual reports, and we acted to ensure that the matter was resolved appropriately. In appointing independent and highly respected barrister Mr John McKenna QC to investigate these claims, the Premier ensured Queenslanders would continue to have confidence in the integrity of the office of the State Archivist.

In that report, which I will table now, Mr McKenna found 'no reasonable suspicion that any of the persons involved in the preparation of these annual reports acted other than lawfully and appropriately'.

Tabled paper: Document, dated 4 March 2022, from JD McKenna QC, titled 'Review of the Allegations Attributed to the former State Archivist about the Queensland State Archives' Annual Reports for 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20' [273](#).

He found that the three annual reports of 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 were all prepared by the Queensland State Archives and reviewed by departmental officers prior to the finalisation of the reports. There was no involvement of the minister or his staff. He found that interactions between senior officers of the department and the former state archivist regarding the contents of the report were in line with regular work undertaken when preparing annual reports and constituted 'good administrative practice'. Mr McKenna QC notes that departmental officers only ever respectfully requested that the former state archivist consider making particular changes, and that none of these requests were inappropriate or motivated by improper reasons. He also highlights that the ultimate decision-making responsibility for the final text of the annual reports always rested with the former state archivist.

I would like to thank Mr McKenna QC for his report into this important matter. It is pleasing to hear that no improper conduct has occurred. I am also pleased that we can all continue to have faith in the integrity of the office of the State Archivist. Queenslanders can continue to take comfort in the knowledge that this government operates to the highest standard of integrity and accountability. Queenslanders know that when concerns arise we take them seriously and deal with them appropriately.