




Speech By
Bryson Head

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2023

TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (3.41 pm): I would also like to contribute to the debate on this committee report which was an examination of Auditor-General's report No. 18 for 2021-22 titled *Enhancing government procurement*. I start by noting that this committee report was actually tabled in December 2022. Here we are on 12 October 2023—a full 10 months later. It certainly would have been a lot nicer to be able to contribute to this discussion a lot sooner. When the Premier decides to only set a limited number of sitting weeks for the year, we take a little while to get through things. This is what happens when the Premier spends more time on superyachts, on the red carpet or overseas than here in the chamber, as has been reported in newspapers.

I note that the Queensland Audit Office report made five recommendations. The first recommendation states—

Queensland Treasury and Queensland Government Procurement (within the Department of Energy and Public Works) should monitor and report on how departments are collaborating to achieve whole-of-government procurement outcomes

This certainly encourages the government to be more effective with taxpayers' money, because we know that there is a lot spent in Queensland that could be spent a lot better thanks to the failures of the government.

The second recommendation states—

Queensland Treasury and Queensland Government Procurement should engage with departments about the costs and benefits (at a whole-of-government level) of moving to a universal classification system for expenditure

The third recommendation states—

Queensland Treasury and Queensland Government Procurement should enhance information and data sharing, between the 2 departments, to support strategic procurement decision-making

The fourth recommendation states—

Departments should use existing whole-of-government procurement arrangements (designed to streamline and improve procurement for specific goods or services), and Queensland Government Procurement should monitor and report on this

The fifth recommendation states—

Queensland Government Procurement should ensure its most recent data strategy is endorsed. It should also develop, and report against, a detailed implementation plan which outlines how its data strategy objectives will be achieved

As the member for Gregory noted, this report was tabled some time ago. We certainly hope that a lot of these recommendations have been implemented by the government.

One thing that we learned on the committee from the Audit Office report was that there are 23,592 unused telephone devices across 20 government departments—that is a pretty staggering figure. I know that there are a lot of public servants in Queensland, and some of those phones do serve a

particular purpose, but—without being able to specify what the devices are—the Audit Office said that they identified at least a half a million dollar a year saving if there were not as many unused devices that the government and taxpayers were paying for.

The Audit Office also said that in 2019 and 2020 the state recorded its first operating deficit in seven years and had to borrow \$4.8 billion more than was originally budgeted. It is certainly not good when governments have to borrow money for operational expenditure. Borrowing money for infrastructure projects and things that will pay dividends in the future is certainly one thing, but borrowing money to cover operational day-to-day costs is not something that we should be have to tolerate in Queensland.

Queensland government departments spent a significant amount—approximately \$18.5 billion in 2020-21—on non-frontline activities. That is a lot of money being spent on non-frontline activities. The constituents of Callide know that there is a big lack of frontline activities and frontline services being delivered across the electorate of Callide. I would love to see more of that money being spent on delivering frontline services, rather than people running around and dealing with red tape. We know that the Palaszczuk Labor government loves red tape. It ties up a lot of administration staff in department and it means that they cannot do their job of delivering frontline services in Queensland. They are not taking advantage of the opportunity to get a better deal.