




Speech By  
**James Lister**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS**

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**INFORMATION PRIVACY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL;  
PUBLIC RECORDS BILL**

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (4.24 pm): I rise to make a contribution in the cognate debate on the Information Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Public Records Bill. Like the member for Stafford, I will confine my contribution to matters pertaining to the Information Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill because that was what came before the committee that I am a member of. I also acknowledge my fellow committee members: the chair, the member for Redlands; the member for Stafford; the member for Rockhampton; the member for Theodore; and the member for Hinchinbrook. We have a pretty good committee. We have a good time. This was an interesting bill for us. As the member for Stafford said, it is one that would routinely come to us. It came to us because the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee is rather busy at the moment. I would believe that having been on that committee myself.

I will confine my contributions primarily to the implications that this bill has for local governments. Local government to me, being most close to me, are small councils like the Goondiwindi Regional Council and the Southern Downs Regional Council, and there are many councils smaller than that. As the Local Government Association of Queensland made clear in their quite comprehensive submission and in their appearance before us, councils take very seriously their responsibility to look after the data of their ratepayers and the people they do business with. It is important. The member for Nanango mentioned the data spills we have seen from the likes of Optus and others which have been quite traumatic events for many people. We do not want to see that. I would say, however, speaking generally here, that the state government is behind in its own implementation of cybersecurity and the protection of the vital information of people and information that needs to be kept confidential by the state.

The Auditor-General, in his most recent report, highlighted again that many agencies are not progressing as they should in implementing the necessary measures. I do not say that is because of a lack of will. This is a complex area. When we talk about local government we are talking about agencies that are very small and do not have the critical mass that large government departments have. If they are struggling to adapt, if they cannot help themselves, how can they help the local government. The Attorney-General in her second reading speech tried to put in context that there will be extra resourcing for the Office of the Information Commissioner in terms of beefing up their own abilities and ostensibly being able to assist local government in complying and coming up to speed with their obligations under this act. I understand that the OIC will have a budget of \$11.5 million over four years and \$2.6 million per annum ongoing.

The Local Government Association of Queensland in its submission said—

A basic Security Operations Centre and Security Information and Event Management solution in local government costs up to \$300,000 per annum, not including internal organisational resources and training. In addition to the financial commitment, finding cyber security professionals and attracting them to local government is considerably challenging. It is well documented that regional, rural, remote and First Nations councils face workforce challenges. Attracting staff with the necessary skills to comply with a mandatory DBN scheme would be difficult.

The mandatory data breach notification scheme is at the core of what I am talking about here. The LGAQ and the councils with whom I have spoken are fully seized of the intent here and they do not disagree with it. They have a voluntarily system at the moment which the Local Government Association of Queensland argued in its submission they should be able to stay with. Be that as it may, I think it is optimistic to think that, even with the additional resourcing the Office of the Information Commissioner will be given, small councils will be able to adopt and comply with the new arrangements without undue cost to themselves.

To give an example, some of the councils we are talking about are very small indeed. I often joke with the CEO of the Southern Downs Regional Council, whose previous role was CEO at the Quilpie Shire Council, that every second Wednesday it is his turn to drive the grader because the council is so small. The difficulties announced by the Local Government Association in their submission, in terms of attracting the right kind of people and, indeed, funding that, are a major concern for those small councils. Going forward, I urge the government to be accommodating with local governments and to take note of the genuine concerns that the Local Government Association of Queensland has expressed on behalf of its members about the costs of implementing and managing this scheme.

I stress that it is not the intention of councils to evade responsibility or evade a requirement to look after the data of people; it is just that they have legitimate concerns. As the mayor of Southern Downs has said to me on a number of occasions, local government attracts three per cent of the revenue—

**Mr Stevens:** Four per cent.

**Mr LISTER:** I take that interjection from my honourable friend the member for Mermaid Beach and former mayor of the Gold Coast. Did I have to remind you of that? Had you forgotten that you were mayor at one stage? They attract four per cent of the funding but about 30 per cent of services have to be rendered. Councils are skint. They run on very tight margins. The possibility of having to put up rates for their landholders or increase charges and fees for their communities is something that they really do not want to have to do for these kinds of purposes.

I will briefly touch on the other aspect of the cognate debate, the Public Records Bill. I associate myself with the contribution made earlier by the member for Surfers Paradise. He outlined, in vivid detail, some of the lamentable aspects of Queensland history concerning the mangocube account and how these changes have come forward because of that. We should remember that the emails in question, which were deleted but retrieved, contained evidence of improper influence by trade unions on the minister. Just today we were all handed a booklet outlining the code of practice for members of parliament. It explicitly states that we should not be influenced by those who hold power or money over us. In my view, that is the definition of the trade unions that control this government. I look forward to seeing them shown the door in '24.