




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2024

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Parole Board, Former President; Yellow Ribbon Day

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.31 pm): If you have something to say, just say it. Those were the words of the Minister for Corrective Services on 26 July during the estimates hearing. In fact, the minister used those very same words again when being asked about the resignation of the former president of the Parole Board. Despite encouraging others to 'just say it', the minister seems reluctant to follow her own advice. A short time later when asked if she was aware of those allegations relating to allowances claimed by the former president, the minister replied, 'Not that I can recall,' and went on to say that when she met with Mr Byrne on 12 June she said—

... I stressed the importance of having a parole board that was well managed and operating effectively and one that the community has confidence in.

We now know, as the minister stated in this House yesterday, she had sought and obtained advice from Crown law prior to the meeting on 12 June. It is fair to wonder why a minister would need advice from Crown law prior to a meeting, especially seeing as the minister merely intended to speak about the importance of good management, effective operations and community confidence.

On several occasions during the course of that estimates hearing and in this House the minister was given the opportunity to, as she suggested, 'just say it'. We know that when the minister met with the former president of the Parole Board she was aware that he had been referred to the CCC, a fact she could not recall during the estimates hearing. A few days later the minister's recollection magically returned via both a public statement tabled on 29 July and in an interview with the *Courier-Mail*. Given the fact that prior to the 12 June meeting the minister knew about the CCC referral and had sought advice from Crown law, Queenslanders would be right to jump to conclusions, let alone the fact that the resignation date agreed upon ensured Mr Byrne would receive—and wait for it—an additional \$30,000 per year for the rest of his life. Queenslanders should not have to jump to conclusions when it comes to statutory bodies and the actions of ministers and senior Labor staffers. This government promised transparency and Queenslanders deserve the truth. Instead, we are being referred time and time again to written statements. I say to the minister: please follow your own advice and if you have something to say, just say it.

In the time I have remaining I acknowledge all of our rural fires on Yellow Ribbon Day as part of Rural Fire Service Week. They do a great job right across the state and we appreciate everything they do for us.