



Speech By  
**Daniel Purdie**


**MEMBER FOR NINDERRY**

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## **ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

### **Report, Motion to take note**

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (2.01 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Economics and Governance Committee's report No. 44, *Examination of Auditor-General reports*. As a former member of that committee, I want to take the opportunity to thank the committee: the chair, the member for Logan; the deputy chair, the member for Mermaid Beach; the member for Macalister; and the member for Hervey Bay, who I understand is on sick leave and I wish him a speedy recovery. I also want to acknowledge the hardworking members of the secretariat. It is a very hardworking committee—

**Mr Stevens:** Correct.

**Mr PURDIE:**—as the deputy chair knows. Speaking of hardworking, I want to acknowledge the Auditor-General, Mr Brendan Worrall, who has recently announced his resignation and will be finishing up soon. He has done a very important job and a great job for a long time. It is not an easy task, trying your best to let the sunshine in against a government that does everything it can to keep Queenslanders in the dark. Queensland has been well served by the Auditor-General, who has performed at this challenging role without fear or favour, exposing serious flaws in government processes and helping shine a light on this government's ongoing efforts to control the way things look rather than how they actually are. Queenslanders can be grateful the Auditor-General has done an outstanding job in holding this government to account. Queenslanders rightly deserve and expect a Public Service that acts with integrity and free of political interference. It has been thanks to the unwavering efforts of the Auditor-General and his office that many of this government's bad habits and underhanded tactics have been exposed.

In relation to report No. 44, last year the committee examined seven Auditor-General reports that had been referred to it between May 2022 and March 2023. These include: QAO report Nos 14 and 11 into state entities; report No. 17 into appointing and renewing government bodies; report No. 2 into improving grant management; report No. 3 into managing Queensland's COVID-19 economic response and recovery; report No. 4 into the status of the Auditor-General's recommendations; and report No. 6 into managing workforce agility in the Queensland public sector. I note that my committee colleagues have already commented on a number of these reports and I will not be revisiting the ones they have spoken about, so I will be reflecting on report No. 14, which in part considered machinery-of-government changes.

Machinery-of-government changes, including changes to department names and responsibilities, can be a common occurrence after elections or reshuffles. These changes may seek to align services with government objectives with ministerial appointments. However, as report No. 14 found, these MoG changes are rarely quick, inexpensive or simple. This point is not lost on Queenslanders, who have been subjected to a number of these during the three terms of this chaotic government in crisis and chaos. For example, the QAO report found that the transfer of employees, assets, information systems and records can be lengthy and complicated and can sometimes take years to complete, with

associated costs. From a cultural perspective, functions that move frequently between departments are more likely to become insular and resist fully integrating into their new departments, and this can affect the flow of information and how risks are managed and decisions are made.

During implementation, resources and attention are naturally directed to these restructures, and this can distract agencies from their other responsibilities such as the coordination of service delivery and engagement with key stakeholders. These activities can also be affected by disruptions in relationships with suppliers and customers through changes to department names, to people in executive positions and to employee contact details. The changes can make it more difficult to assess the financial and performance information of departments over time because the nature of their operations, and therefore the composition of their financial results, changes with each restructure of government. Each change requires entities to re-establish their culture and develop consistent internal controls, with regular changes potentially reducing the focus a department puts on such controls and reducing the ability for it to develop and mature.

None of this would be new information to Queenslanders. They have had a front row seat as they have seen the ministerial reshuffles play out again and again as this third-term government lurches from crisis to crisis. The names and faces around the table remain the same, the factional allies remain constant and the faceless union powerbrokers continue to pull the strings. It is just a different day with the same issues of cover-ups and cost blowouts, but it is thanks to the role and independence of the Auditor-General that we can shine a light on these issues. I commend the report and the work of the outgoing Auditor-General, Brendan Worrall, to the House and wish him all of the best for the future.