



Speech By  
**Linus Power**


**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 February 2024

**ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (2.41 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the Economics and Governance Committee Report No. 44, 57th Parliament, *Examination of Auditor-General reports*, tabled on 21 April 2023.

I want to alert the House to the fine work that the EGC is doing in our statutory role. The Economics and Governance Committee, which is now the Cost of Living and Economics Committee—the CoLE Committee, as ‘Ray the wit’ has dubbed it—has the special role of focusing on the cost of living. We will also continue to have oversight of the statutory role of the Queensland Auditor-General. The statutory role is governed by the Auditor-General Act and is quite important, in that the office is set up by the aegis of that act. The Auditor-General has the ability to conduct audits on departments, matters and entities as well as performance audits and chooses them through the statutory process of informing the committee. The Auditor-General does these audits independently and chooses which audits to undertake.

Importantly, when the Auditor-General undertakes a performance audit, the object of the audit includes: deciding whether the objectives of the public sector entity are achieved economically, efficiently and effectively and in compliance with all relevant laws, and identifying any opportunities for the public sector entity to achieve its objectives more economically, efficiently and effectively. It is also very important that the statute dictates that the Auditor-General has a limit to the independence—in that the Auditor-General must not question the merits of policy objectives of the state or a local government, including a decision of cabinet, a direction of a minister, a policy statement in the budget papers of the state or a local government, a document evidencing a policy decision of a cabinet or a minister, and a document evidencing a policy decision of a local government. In that way, the Auditor-General acts as an important tool to get greater efficiency out of our Public Service and looks at the objectives of the government and looks for greater efficiencies, while still attempting to achieve the democratically elected government’s objectives within their framework. I want to highlight for the House one particular report of the Auditor-General—

**Mr Stevens:** The COVID one.

**Mr POWER:** That is correct—the management of the COVID economic response. That will go down in history as an extraordinarily strong health and economic response. I was lucky enough to tune in to a program on the ABC on my son’s recommendation called *Nemesis*—it might be obscure for some.

**Mr Smith:** What’s it about?

**Mr POWER:** It is a history documentary. Within this documentary, I noticed that former prime minister Morrison stated that during COVID—

**Mrs Frecklington:** What is the relevance of this?

**Mr POWER:** The relevance is that former prime minister Morrison at that point during COVID said that he thought the nation would face 15 per cent unemployment and that is what they were working on. He went further to say that he noted that it was the states that actually delivered on health care and the implementation of policy. The states actually delivered.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr POWER:** This is his history. I am not sure if you see former prime minister Morrison as a reliable narrator of facts—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Member for Logan, through the chair, please.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. The member is not taking interjections. Member for Logan, I draw you back to the report, please.

**Mr POWER:** As I said, it was the states that actually delivered so in some ways this is reflective on the report—

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr POWER:** Can you give us a break here? This is a serious issue.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Logan and member for Nanango, we will not have any arguing across the chamber. Member for Logan, through the chair, please.

**Mr POWER:** It is no wonder they want to silence talk of that extraordinarily good performance. Let us never forget that in 2015 when we got into office unemployment was at 6.7 per cent. We saw extraordinarily good economic growth, including employment growth, and got that down to 3.6 per cent. The last government would never have dreamed of that. If we had that government, we would have faced former prime minister Morrison's fears of 15 per cent and he was probably fearing what they would have done.