




Speech By  
**Linus Power**

**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 February 2024

### **INTEGRITY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (4.04 pm): I rise to endorse the Integrity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 and the work of the committee. Before speaking to the bill, I want to note some things about the previous speech. There are obviously two approaches we could take to this particular legislation. There will be those who address the actual bill and the careful and worthwhile improvements in the processes of the Queensland government put forward by Professor Coaldrake and Mr Yearbury.

**Mr Stevens:** That would be me.

**Mr POWER:** I note that the deputy chair called out, 'That would be me,' and indeed it would. During the committee process the deputy chair examined the detail of the bill and took particular interest in the discussions we had surrounding a question he put during the hearings about the possibility of someone who was a lobbyist ceasing to be a lobbyist, taking on a role and becoming a lobbyist again. It was an excellent question that we discussed. The answer was unsatisfactory for the committee and we followed up on it. I am pleased to see that that serious work—a commitment to factual integrity and the examination of the bill—reaped rewards from a responsible Attorney-General who was interested in the detail and who brought forward changes that I think satisfy the concerns that we had as a committee.

There is a difference between that approach and the approach of those who are not interested in the careful work of government to make significant changes to accountability, to listen to critiques, to listen to new ideas and to put them into action. There are those who will ignore almost all of the simple and practical measures of this bill and, instead, undertake a misplayed political tirade and attempt to sling mud. This shows a total lack of commitment to the very integrity that this bill seeks to improve.

I want to remind members that this is the person who brought up all sorts of outlandish accusations about the laptop and the Integrity Commissioner. The member for Maroochydore made a mockery of her title as 'shadow integrity minister' when she did that. She misled this House about this important office, and the CCC had to take the extraordinary—

**Ms SIMPSON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member's comments are untrue and offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Member, thank you for your point of order. As the Speaker reflected this morning, it is personal offence that you are taking issue with. I ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr POWER:** I withdraw. The CCC had to take the extraordinary step of releasing a report which addressed all of the accusations made. You would think that at that point someone who was the shadow minister for integrity would be sacked—that would be quite simple. However, the problem was the Leader of the Opposition had made the very same spurious accusations. He had a choice: to sack the shadow integrity minister, who has no integrity, and sack himself or do nothing? Frankly, he took the weak way out, and integrity in Queensland is for the worse.

I have shown that this opposition has no genuine commitment to integrity. It has no genuine commitment to the detail of this bill.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members to my left! I am struggling to make out what the member for Logan is saying.

**Mr POWER:** The exceptions are those who were on the committee, who took this matter seriously and raised points that made a difference to law and to integrity in this state. They were backed up by the other members in the committee. I do not mind admitting that. I do not mind admitting that the Attorney-General did a great job in listening. That is what a committee process is for. You would also hope that would involve the opposition actually reading the bill. Although in her speech the member for Maroochydore mentioned the Coaldrake report every three seconds, in 30 minutes she did not mention any of the amendments in the bill.

**Mr Lister:** I am not going to get a chance to speak on this, Linus, because it's being guillotined, right?

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SMITH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is on standing order 251, that the member on their feet should not be interrupted. I ask for your ruling as to the member for Southern Downs.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Bundaberg, it appeared to me that the member for Logan was taking or about to take the interjections of the member for Southern Downs. In any case, member for Logan, you have the call.

**Mr POWER:** I want to clarify that the member for Southern Downs will never have an interjection worth taking and I will not take them. He also has no genuine commitment to integrity because he wants to shout down statements. That reveals that this is just a mudslinging match instead of dealing with the provisions of the bill.

I would hope that this opposition that asks for so much extra time would take this bill seriously, but they do not take anything seriously. I have spoken very clearly about the initiatives related to those who lobby in this state and the changes that this committee recommended. As I stated, this bill seeks to make a number of important public sector reforms. They were responses to the review of culture in the Queensland public sector by Professor Peter Coaldrake and the Strategic Review of the Integrity Commissioner's Functions by Mr Kevin Yearbury. This follows an initial series of reforms and response to these reports in last year's Integrity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The introductory speech states that this second bill continues the journey, building a strong, contemporary and enduring framework in Queensland by implementing the recommendations of the second report.

For the benefit of the shadow integrity minister I want to outline that it increases the regulation of lobbying activity—not mentioned. It includes clarifying what lobbying activity is and enhancing the regulatory role of the Queensland Integrity Commissioner—barely mentioned. It amends the conditions for registration as a lobbyist to reflect expectations around completing the important training and managing conflicts of interest, which are so important—not mentioned at all. It introduces a prohibition on registered lobbyists playing a substantial role for a political party in an election campaign. This was only mentioned when the shadow minister for integrity—so claimed—attacked the staff of the parliament saying that they had not distributed the amendments.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. That is highly offensive and untrue. It is personally offensive and untrue and I ask that it be withdrawn. It is extremely offensive.

**Mr POWER:** I withdraw.

**Ms SIMPSON:** I have been verbally. That is untrue and I take offence and I ask that it be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Maroochydore, you have made your point of order. Member for Logan, will you withdraw, please?

**Mr POWER:** I withdraw, and I do expect there to be an apology to the staff who did come around and distribute those changes.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. That is not an unreserved apology or withdrawal, and I ask that the member unreservedly and without qualification withdraw his offensive comments.

**Mr POWER:** I am happy to withdraw. We do note they were distributed before lunch. If members on any side were too lazy to pick them up, too lazy to read them or too lazy to understand the important changes that were made through the good work of the committee and especially the deputy chair, that is a failing on them. If any member wishes to lash out and attack the parliamentary staff, I will not have it because they did their job; they distributed the amendments before lunch.

The bill enhances the independence of some of the statutory integrity bodies by increasing the role of the parliamentary committees in the additional funding proposals and contributing more to key appointments. I think this is an important role in our unicameral parliament. We have to have that balance. We looked at how other parliaments have done it. The deputy chair and I had very strong and robust discussions about this and came to an agreed position—and I may be verballing—that this balance is about right. We have a role in ensuring oversight of their expenditure and budget, but there is still Westminster accountability and integrity over the budget process. I think that is important and I hope the deputy chair thinks the same.

We enhanced the jurisdiction of the Queensland Ombudsman to consider complaints about and initiate investigations of government services provided by non-government entities. I think this will be one of the legacies that will have a long-lasting effect. I think the shadow integrity minister could have bothered mentioning it because it will be important in the long term. We established the Office of the Queensland Integrity Commissioner as a statutory body, clarifying that role that used to simply be seen as an advice lawyer into more of a statutory body and clarifying also the trusts that the Auditor-General is required to audit.

These are a group of sensible progressions that are quite detailed that took a lot of work for public servants—and cheers to the lobby who examined all of this detail. They took it very carefully. They approached ministers. They compared and contrasted the ideas that were put forward from the various reports. It strengthens the integrity of our state. I was pleased to act as the committee chair and we took this job seriously. We took this approach and the actual legislation put forward seriously.

What I am gutted by is that there will be two types of speeches: by those who take it seriously and by those who seek to throw mud, and it shows. We saw the shadow Treasurer talk about how past behaviour is an indication of future behaviour. If the behaviour of the shadow minister for 'integrity' in this debate is any indication of how she and the opposition would potentially approach integrity in office, Queensland is in a dark place because they were more interested in the disgusting mud throwing and complete ignorance. I do not know whether they had no idea—

*(Time expired)*