




Speech By
Melissa McMahon

MEMBER FOR MACALISTER

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INTEGRITY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (4.25 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Integrity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I think that I might actually focus my contribution on the content of the bill and—

Government members interjected.

Mrs McMAHON: I know, because as a member of the committee we spent a significant amount of time not only working with Mr Yearbury in relation to his report—the five-yearly review of the Office of the Integrity Commissioner—but also in examination of this bill. Obviously the committee has significant correspondence and opportunity to meet with the Integrity Commissioner as part of our oversight, so I am going to spend—shock, horror—a significant portion of my time this afternoon actually talking to the contents of the bill rather than a trip down memory lane with the history of Queensland that, I must admit, predates me being an adult.

This bill—and I highlight the word ‘bill’—represents the vehicle to implement recommendations from both the Professor Coaldrake *Let the sunshine in* report and the *Strategic review into the Integrity Commissioner’s functions* by Mr Kevin Yearbury. The bill is the second tranche of reforms to strengthen the regulation of lobbying in Queensland and enhance the independence of statutory bodies in Queensland, so the inference in saying that this is the second tranche infers that there is more work to do. I do not think there is anyone on this side of the House who is claiming that the work is all done and dusted and that we can put the cue in the rack. We know that ensuring the integrity of decision-making in this state is an ongoing task for every government of every colour.

There are a number of reforms in relation to lobbying in Queensland, and I must admit that the area of lobbying is one that is mostly a mystery to me and, I am going to say, the fair majority of Queenslanders. It is not something that they have anything to do with on a regular basis, but they do understand the need for transparency when decisions are made by government, particularly when it comes to the spending of taxpayer money. The bill increases regulation of lobbying activity here in Queensland and enhances the role of the Integrity Commissioner in this space. It establishes the Office of the Integrity Commissioner as a statutory body. It enhances the independence of other statutory bodies by increasing the involvement of parliamentary committees in additional funding proposals, and I note that that will probably mean some additional work to be done by committees if they have oversight of a statutory body, and there are a few pieces of legislation as well as bits that are incorporated in the amendments that go to the timings and reporting on those funding submissions by statutory bodies. The bill clarifies what lobbying activity includes and what it does not include; it amends conditions for registration as a lobbyist to reflect expectations; and it introduces a prohibition on registered lobbyists playing a substantial role for a political party and that in the event that a lobbyist does they must notify the Integrity Commissioner and they will then be disqualified from being a lobbyist for the duration of the next term of government, regardless of who wins.

This is something that we looked at in terms of a number of invocations of the Human Rights Act because to come up with a piece of legislation that prohibits someone from carrying out their primary form of employment does come with some human rights implications. However, I think the fact that it is clear from the outset will negate some of that. Again, as I said, the idea that someone can influence a political party coming into government and then actually have a role in then lobbying that government is one that may be concerning to the layperson.

There is also the inclusion of mandatory education for those who do register to be lobbyists so that they are aware and informed of the repercussions for engaging in activities such as dual hatting. I understand that there are a number of people who are on the list to speak. Some of them may actually speak to the bill. Even though as committee members we spent many days and hours considering the bill, I would certainly like to hear contributions from other members of this chamber who have actually read the bill and choose to actually debate the bill in this House. I commend the bill to the House.