




Speech By
David Lee

MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY

Record of Proceedings, 20 November 2025

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Queensland Human Rights Commission, Conduct

 **Mr LEE** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (2.43 pm): I rise to speak to legitimate concerns about the conduct of the Queensland Human Rights Commission in dealing with and closing a recent human rights and anti-discrimination matter. In about mid-2024, during a Fraser Coast Regional Council ordinary meeting, a local resident—the complainant—was given the opportunity to speak during a public participation meeting. On registration and before speaking, each community participant is informed of the speaking rules and time limits. Community speakers are normally given three minutes; however, council's policy allows the chair to extend the speaking time to five minutes.

Councillor Paul Truscott, as chair, provided the complainant six minutes; however, the speaker continued for almost 10 minutes—well beyond council's policy. Councillor Truscott prompted the speaker several times to bring the presentation to its core objective so that, presumably, councillors could understand the purpose of the presentation. I am informed that the complainant then behaved rudely and was hostile, and after 10 minutes the presentation concluded.

The complainant subsequently lodged a Queensland Human Rights Commission complaint claiming breaches under the Human Rights Act 2019 and the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991, including claims he was constantly interrupted, denied the allocated time and threatened with removal from the council meeting room by security. The Queensland Human Rights Commission pursued the matter based on alleged breaches to the right to freedom of expression, the right to take part in public life, the right to recognition and equality before the law and the right to privacy and reputation.

I am informed that CCTV, audio footage and witness statements that could have contradicted the complainant's allegations were proffered as evidence but refused by the commission. The commission appeared to have no regard as to whether the allegations could be substantiated. Section 69 of the Human Rights Act 2019 provides that the Human Rights Commissioner must reject a human rights complaint 'if the commissioner considers the complaint is frivolous, trivial, vexatious, misconceived or lacking in substance'.

It beggars belief that the respondent, Councillor Truscott, would be embroiled in a Human Rights Commission dispute that dragged on for nearly 18 months and incurred over \$15,000 in legal costs alone, ultimately borne by the ratepayers. It also raised unrealistic complainant expectations that their case had real prospects of success. How can the commissioner exercise the section 69 power without some robust substantiation of the facts? In closing, I strongly urge the Queensland Human Rights Commissioner to explain how it is that this case could drag on for so long at considerable cost to all concerned.