



Speech By  
**Lance McCallum**


**MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 May 2025

**GOVERNANCE, ENERGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.12 pm): I am very pleased to be able to contribute to the debate in this House in relation to the *Queensland Audit Office Annual Report*. I would like to start my contribution by thanking all staff at the Queensland Audit Office for the work that they do. We have heard from previous speakers about the important role that the Queensland Audit Office undertakes in Queensland as the independent auditor of decisions by government on taxpayers' money. It is an incredibly important role. I would also like to thank the Queensland Auditor-General and the staff who took the time to come and brief our committee. It was a fulsome and very comprehensive briefing where we traversed some quite interesting topics and some very important issues. Some of those I will talk about during this contribution.

One of the things that we discussed at the public hearing was the potential for an overlap of role or scope between the work of the Queensland Audit Office and the newly established—it has not been established but when it is—Queensland Productivity Commission. I think that that is an incredibly important and salient point. We have a longstanding independent Queensland Audit Office. The Queensland Auditor-General is an officer of this parliament. We are now going to see the LNP government establish their Queensland Productivity Commission. There has been a lot of commentary about that in this place particularly from the Treasurer.

I put it to the Queensland Auditor-General whether or not there was any concern from her perspective around a potential overlap or conflict in the work of the Audit Office and the potential work of the Queensland Productivity Commission. I was heartened initially to hear that from the Auditor-General's point of view she believes that there should not be—should not be—any conflict or crossover between the roles of the Audit Office and the Productivity Commission. She then did raise a concern where she said—

It would absolutely be of concern if our work is directed by government. It is very important to have an independent office here providing oversight of the public sector and assurance back to parliament on the efficient and effective performance of the public sector. The independence of the Auditor-General and the office is critically important for trust of government. In terms of the government's own Productivity Commission, they can set that up how they please. Within which mechanism it sits, either within a government department or as a separate body, it has taken that form in various ways over the years and that would be up to the discretion of government.

Let's be really clear: it is on the government—it is on the Treasurer—to make sure that there is no undermining of the independence of the Queensland Auditor-General when it comes to how the Queensland Productivity Commission operates. That is extremely important for Queensland.

I must say I was a little bit disappointed at the hearing with a line of questioning from the member for Caloundra, who asked a question that inferred some negative things about the work of the Queensland Audit Office. I think it reflects very poorly. The member for Caloundra effectively attacked the work of the QAO saying, and I quote from *Hansard*—

It is, yes, except the language that you use is 'it should help'. The bit I am trying to figure out is you do all this great work, you make these recommendations, but are there outcomes from your recommendations at the other end that are being achieved and how do we ensure that you are not spending all of this time and resources making these recommendations and yet it is not having an overall impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Public Service?

That is a very poor comment on the work of the QAO.