




Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

Record of Proceedings, 26 August 2025

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; JUSTICE,
INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE, REPORT**

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (5.41 pm): Secrecy, cover-ups, arrogance and protection racket—those are not my words; those were the words of the member for Nanango in 2018, who it appears was some pinnacle of integrity in opposition but is not so interested in the estimates process now.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for Gaven, I have been advised directly that the term ‘protection racket’ has in the past been deemed unparliamentary language. I would ask you to withdraw.

Ms SCANLON: I withdraw, Mr Deputy Speaker. This is a government that promised independence, transparency and accountability. Instead, Queenslanders are getting secrecy, political stacking and a re-run of the Newman-era playbook.

Premier Crisafulli promised a public service ‘free from political interference’. He said, ‘I want a public service that is led by someone who is truly independent.’ He was very critical of directors-general who had any former connection with a political party, but it appears there is one rule for the LNP and another rule for everyone else. Take the new Director-General of the Department of Justice, Sarah Cruickshank, as an example. Under questioning, she admitted that she was the chief of staff to former Liberal premier Gladys Berejiklian. That is not just political involvement; being the chief of staff to a premier is arguably the most political job in a government. We can add that to her work for Liberal MPs Brendan Nelson and Helen Coonan, and even her political donation to a Liberal candidate. Individuals are entitled to their own political history, but when the Premier tells Queenslanders that he will deliver a truly independent public service and then fills the top jobs with Liberal alumni I think most people would consider that to be a broken promise.

This government also quietly rewrote the rules on judicial appointments. They have expanded the Attorney-General’s discretion over who sits on the panel. They have stripped out groups like the anti-discrimination commissioner and the Women Lawyers Association and added in a cosy carve-out for current or former judicial executives. I wonder why that is. When asked if the Attorney-General now effectively holds a veto over the Bar Association’s and Law Society’s nominations, the director-general could not, or would not, answer the question. I asked the Attorney-General, ‘Why add that veto if you trust the nominations of the Law Society and the Bar Association?’ This is not about independence; it is about control. A system once designed to safeguard integrity is now designed to safeguard the government of the day.

Looming over it all is Mr Sosso. He sat as the director-general of state development on the judicial appointments panel and on the Redistribution Commission—the very body that draws Queensland’s electoral boundaries. This is the same Mr Sosso whom Tony Fitzgerald has described as being susceptible to influence, and now he influences everything that matters—appointments to the courts, commissions and careers. Only in the Crisafulli government could a man once deemed susceptible to

influence be given influence over almost every lever of power. This government also loves to quote the Coaldrake report—

Mrs Frecklington: Hear, hear!

Ms SCANLON:—but it has completely ignored Coaldrake's call for transparency. I hear the Attorney-General saying, 'Hear, hear!' I look forward to her implementing those recommendations in full. Queensland is the only state in the country that requires cabinet documents to be released within 30 days, yet what we discovered during the estimates hearings is that fewer than half of the government's cabinet submissions have actually been released, including important submissions in relation to youth justice reforms. Why? It was confirmed in the estimates hearings that it is the ministers themselves who decide what is marked as secret. When it suits them they keep Queenslanders in the dark, and that is the decision that the Attorney-General has made.

Queenslanders are still waiting to see the Expert Legal Panel's advice on the government's Adult Crime, Adult Time laws—advice paid for with taxpayers' dollars. Despite repeated questioning by the media, by organisations external to government and by the opposition, they are refusing to release it.

We also learn the government has abandoned a Law Reform Commission review into mining lease objections. They have spent \$2.8 million of taxpayers' money and have nothing to show for it. We asked about the legal costs of Crown Law fighting the pause on hormone therapies for children in Queensland Health facilities, and, again, the Attorney-General said she did not know. I hope she can answer today.

(Time expired)