



Speech By  
**Hon. Meaghan Scanlon**


**MEMBER FOR GAVEN**

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Record of Proceedings, 18 September 2025

**JUSTICE, INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (3.09 pm): I rise to speak on the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee's report titled *Oversight of the Office of the Information Commissioner*. At the outset can I thank the committee, particularly the members for Toohey and Macalister. Unlike the Attorney-General, I am happy to thank all of the committee members because I appreciate that everyone does important work overseeing these really important bodies to make sure those bodies are held to account. Oversight might not make the front page, but it is the linchpin of accountability.

Labor has always believed that Queenslanders deserve access to information about their government. That has been demonstrated by previous Labor governments. This morning we heard about some of the work of the Hon. Rod Welford and the significant work that happened over many generations to make sure that Queenslanders have access to information.

Sunlight is the best disinfectant. I know this personally because for many years my mum worked as a freedom-of-information officer in the Public Service. From dinner table discussions I learned that transparency is not aspirational; it is a right. The staff who administer right to information rarely get the recognition they deserve, but they are the guardians of that right and they do really important work. The Office of the Information Commissioner—the Information Commissioner, the Right to Information Commissioner, the Privacy Commissioner and their staff—carry the burden of making government accountable. I thank them and their teams for the work that they do.

Page 5 of the committee's report is clear: the OIC is mandated to promote 'a proactive and positive culture of information access'. That is the benchmark. That is what Queenslanders expect. Unfortunately, under the Crisafulli government, what do we see? The complete opposite. For all the talk about letting the sun shine in, this government has slammed the shutters closed. Ministers, including the Minister for Integrity, are sitting on expert advice and cabinet documents, despite the fact that there are a whole range of reports that they purported to be big advocates of, such as the Coaldrake review, but now that they are in government suddenly they are less interested in integrity and transparency. Applications are being delayed or refused. Queenslanders are compelled into external reviews to access information they are legally entitled to.

This is not just my view. Media reports have repeatedly documented the Crisafulli government's failures in relation to information that Queenslanders ought to know. The ABC news reported that the government was refusing to release advice made by an independent expert panel that recommended the Making Queensland Safer Laws. We have had two tranches of law reform and still not seen any of that information. A *Courier-Mail* piece carried the headline 'Lazy or incompetent?: LNP accused of integrity fail over missing documents'. That article pointed out that we have still not seen most of the cabinet documents that those opposite seem to be analysing, which is unfortunate because I think Queenslanders have a right to know.

Even the opposition has had to lodge external review applications with the OIC because, clearly, ministers are refusing to fully cooperate. Let us think about that. Those sworn to enforce transparency are now being forced into legal back-and-forth processes simply so the public can see what was done in their name. That is not a proactive or positive culture of information access; it is a culture of secrecy. It is a culture built to shield and not to inform. This matters. When governments hide information, it is not politicians who suffer most; it is people. It is families trying to understand decisions about their children's education, health or safety. It is journalists who are trying to hold power to account. It is citizens who are denied their right to know.

The Office of the Information Commissioner's work may not always be glamorous but it is vital. It is the dividing line between accountable government and secretive government. Under the Crisafulli government, that line is being strained like never before. On behalf of Labor, I thank the OIC, every right-to-information officer across government and everyone who continues to push for transparency, often under pressure and frequently against the current. Queenslanders deserve better than a government addicted to secrecy. They deserve one that does not just tolerate openness but embraces it, and that is what the opposition will continue to hold this government to account on. I thank the committee members and the OIC for their important work and the report before the House.