



Speech By
Melissa McMahon

MEMBER FOR MACALISTER

Record of Proceedings, 12 February 2026

JUSTICE, INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Ms McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (3.26 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the committee report of the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee regarding the oversight of the Queensland Ombudsman. I thank my fellow committee members who carried out the public hearing earlier this year. There has been a lot of talk about the role of the Ombudsman being to promote the humane treatment of and prevention of harm to detainees. That was as a result of the Inspector of Detention Services Act that was introduced under Labor. The act was introduced a number of years ago but, as is captured in this report, that role did not start until July 2023. The first report provided by the Ombudsman in the capacity of Inspector of Detention Services was tabled in late 2024. I believe it was prior to the election. It is important, as this was the first report by the Ombudsman in that role, to reflect on the first ever report of that nature.

That overview role was created so that members of this House, through the committee, can openly question the Ombudsman to determine the state of detention services within Queensland. That was a move to promote transparency and accountability of government. Going forward over the next term, the committee looks forward to making sure the recommendations of the Ombudsman in that report are followed through and we see improvement year on year.

The role of most ombudsmen in Queensland is to determine what is wrong and make recommendations. The Ombudsman has other significant roles within Queensland, specifically in relation to complaints about government agencies. I am sure most members and their staff are familiar with the public interest disclosures, PIDs, that come through to our offices. There has probably been many a member of this House who has been tripped up by PIDs not being appropriately or adequately followed through. I take this opportunity to thank the parliamentary staff who provided training only a few weeks ago to our electorate office staff on how to best handle those PIDs when they come into our electorate office. We often have a lot of turnover of staff.

I refer to the sheer volume of complaints. The report outlined that there were 6,295 complaints and over 1,000 investigations were finalised. As many members of the House would know, a lot of complaints come through but they do not always hit the particular threshold for a full investigation. However, of those 1,000 investigations, 178 recommendations were made. Ensuring that government departments follow up on those recommendations is important. So that that does not need to happen in the first place, the Ombudsman and his office have made a concerted effort in relation to ensuring that our public servants are trained in how to best deal with members of the public, whether that is through regular emails or actual training sessions. During the period in question, 128 training sessions were conducted throughout Queensland. Ensuring that our public servants are best trained to avoid the issues that create the investigations in the first place is key.

I take this opportunity to thank the staff at the Ombudsman's office, including in the new Inspector of Detention Services unit, and acknowledge their work through the next 12 months. I note that the Ombudsman's office celebrated 50 years in practice. We will be watching and using our committee oversight role into next year. I wish the staff well and I commend the committee report.