




Speech By
Natalie Marr

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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JUSTICE, INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Ms MARR** (Thuringowa—LNP) (3.22 pm): I rise today as the member for Thuringowa and a member of the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee to speak on Report No. 15, 58th Parliament, *Oversight of the Office of the Information Commissioner*. I also would like to acknowledge my fellow members of parliament who are on the committee and the staff who have worked tirelessly to help us throughout this year.

This report, tabled in August 2025, represents a critical piece of parliamentary oversight that highlights the fundamental principles of transparency, accountability and the protection of Queenslanders' rights in an increasingly digital world. The OIC, an independent statutory body, plays a pivotal role in promoting access to government-held information under the Right to Information Act 2009 and safeguarding personal information under the Information Privacy Act 2009.

The report details the OIC's performance across key areas: external reviews of agency decisions, privacy complaint mediation, assistance to agencies and the public; and corporate governance. It highlights its achievements, like handling 696 external review applications, finalising 664 of them with a high informal resolution rate and responding to nearly 6,000 public inquiries. It also notes the challenges such as the increasing demand for services and preparation for major reforms under the Information Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2023, including a new mandatory data breach notification scheme.

The real importance of this report extends beyond its operational details, reflecting its profound significance to this parliament. In a democracy like ours, access to information is the backbone of accountability. Queenslanders entrust their government with vast amounts of personal data from health records to financial details and they expect that information to be handled with the utmost integrity. This report ensures parliament remains vigilant in overseeing the OIC, an office that acts as watchdog for these very rights. Without such oversight, we risk eroding public trust, especially in the wake of high-profile data breaches that have shaken communities across Australia.

Consider the context: in 2023-24 the OIC mediated privacy complaints and it received 41 voluntary data breach notifications from agencies. These represent real people whose privacy was compromised. The report's examination of these matters allows parliament to assess whether our laws are working effectively. For instance, it discusses the OIC's proactive work in preparing for IPOLA reforms, which will introduce unified privacy principles and mandatory breach notifications starting 1 July 2025. This is timely, as AI and digital technologies pose new risks to privacy. The OIC's advice on conducting privacy impact assessments before adopting such technologies is a direct call to action for government agencies, and this report amplifies the message to us here in parliament.

Moreover, this report reinforces parliament's role in fostering a culture of openness. Queensland's RTI framework encourages proactive disclosure of information, reducing the need for formal requests, unlike in other states where request volumes are exponentially higher. In 2022-23

Queensland saw just 16,845 RTI requests, or about 3.1 per capita, compared to 7.1 in Victoria. This efficiency stems from our modern legislation, but it requires ongoing scrutiny to prevent complacency.

The report notes the OIC's engagement activities, like Privacy Awareness Week and The Solomon Lecture, which reached thousands and promoted digital inclusion. By tabling this oversight report, parliament signals its commitment to these initiatives, ensuring rural and regional areas, like my electorate of Thuringowa, are not left behind in understanding their information rights.

Importantly, this report highlights financial and operational efficiencies. The OIC operated with a budget of \$11.397 million, delivering a surplus while investing in a new case management system to handle upcoming reforms. This demonstrates value for taxpayers' money.

In essence, this report is a crucial tool for parliament to uphold the principles of good governance. It draws attention to emerging issues like data breaches and AI risks, and it commends the OIC's efforts in building agency accountabilities. By noting this report, as recommended, we affirm that transparency is essential to maintaining public confidence in our institutions. I commend the OIC team; the Information Commissioner, Joanne Kummrow; the Right to Information Commissioner, Stephanie Winson; and the Acting Privacy Commissioner, Susan Shanley, for their dedication. I thank my committee colleagues and the Parliamentary Service for their work. I commend the committee report to the House.