




Speech By
Nikki Boyd

MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

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QUEENSLAND PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION BILL

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (12.14 pm): The rigour and legitimacy of productivity commissions operating throughout the nation come fundamentally from their independence: the ability to initiate research and analysis on their own and provide unbiased advice to government. This bill does not allow for this. It forces the commission to consider or even seek approval from the Treasurer prior to undertaking any so-called self-initiated research. This construct only serves to create a 'DOGE lite' echo chamber for right wing ideology which, through that narrow lens, will never allow the commission to achieve its central purpose: making better public policy decisions in our state's best interests.

The broad nature of the commission and its power to elicit confidential and personal information reeks of a typical LNP plot for Treasury to investigate politicised targets whilst at arm's length from any scrutiny or consequences. Productivity commissions are not a new concept. While we see them utilised in different ways through different jurisdictions, I want to start my contribution by highlighting in the strongest terms that this LNP Productivity Commission will not be in lock-step with the current models we see in current operation.

By design, this is not a model with any veracity, integrity or independence. This is a politicisation of government at best and a political witch-hunt at worst. Concerningly, the bill outlines the purpose for keeping the function of the commission broad: to allow for anti-intellectual investigations into the veracity of scientific evidence behind economic and social issues. By design, this is a model that will be entirely under the influence and direction of the Treasurer and one that, by design, can never hope to be taken seriously. It is fundamentally flawed, intentionally debased and incapable not only of independence but also accountability and transparency. How can Queenslanders trust the findings of this commission when a sitting commissioner—

Mr Crandon: As opposed to you mob cancelling the productivity commission. As opposed to you cancelling it because you didn't like a report they sent.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order, member for Coomera! Your interjection was not taken.

Ms BOYD: I would like to recommence my contribution by taking the interjection from the member for Coomera. If the member for Coomera is such a strong supporter of Labor's productivity commission, which was set up in 2015, why not re-establish a productivity commission that is based on the same foundation of the very productivity commission that was already in place in Queensland?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members. I was struggling to hear the member for Pine Rivers over all of the interjections from both sides.

Ms BOYD: It seems the LNP blokes over there are very keen for cancel culture to gag people in this place in any kind of debate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Pine Rivers, I would ask that you please refer to members by their appropriate titles. There have been rulings made by Speakers in the past about the use of the term you just used to refer to particular LNP members. Please refrain from doing so.

Ms BOYD: Sadly, these flaws are not an error but are rather an operating model from this Treasurer. This is the minister who tells us there are \$17 billion in savings from scrapping Best Practice Industry Conditions and proves it with a 44-page document with all but two lines redacted. That reeks of transparency! He doubles down when quizzed by the media as to why this information is withheld. Do you think we got an answer, Mr Deputy Speaker? No, of course not. He refused to explain why. 'Not to worry', optimistic backbenchers will cry, 'all will be explained' through the pro-active release model that now front bench integrity, openness and accountability virtue-chanting warriors champion from the Coaldrake report. No, that is not happening either. What a dark pit of despair this has become under the LNP government. More than 100 days and counting now and it is very much 'do as I say and not as I do' from this inept government. We saw on their very first day—

Mr Crandon: Pot. Kettle. Black.

Ms BOYD: Riveting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Pine Rivers, you have the call.

Ms BOYD: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. We saw on their very first day of parliament sitting this term that the LNP came in here and trashed democracy with the repeal of the Path to Treaty Act. In their second week, they gagged the parliament around debate on termination of pregnancy in a desperate attempt to keep their fractious party room united—

Dr ROWAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order relating to relevance and the long title of the bill. I seek your clarification in respect to the member's contribution.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am going to take some advice about that. Member for Pine Rivers, I would ask that you please ensure that your comments remain relevant to the bill.

Ms BOYD: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. These very reforms that the LNP used as their political playthings to lecture around integrity were instantly trashed—and repeatedly trashed—once they got to the government benches. So entrenched is this culture of disregard and contempt that during the committee process on this bill the modelling used to justify the Productivity Commission would not or could not be provided by Treasury officials, despite multiple opportunities to substantiate the basis of LNP facts Queenslanders were being fed through this committee process.

The Treasurer stated that the first order of business of the commission needs to be a comprehensive report of the state's construction sector because BPICs were adding 30 per cent to the cost of major projects. The Treasurer informed Queenslanders that Treasury modelling has also exposed that productivity losses made up the majority of cost increases to major projects. If the Treasurer is fair dinkum about these claims and fair dinkum about his claim to restore respect for the money of Queensland's taxpayers, I call on him to table that advice in this place proving those claims. His department will not or were not permitted to. Queenslanders can be confident of one thing: this is a government that will always put themselves first—their privilege, their political survival and their extreme agenda.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Southern Downs, your interjections are not being taken.

Ms BOYD: It is little wonder this Treasurer is outsourcing his work. His first 10 weeks in the job included three entire weeks spent holidaying. Who gets a new job and heads straight on leave? It is little wonder that one of the major elements of this legislation is the functions and the governance of the commission. This legislation, like the Treasurer's performance, provides limited explanations and, despite big promises on big agendas, work has not started and cynics are lining up around the block.

One of the major deviations from the last Queensland productivity commission is the stark reduction in the commission's independence. In submissions, this iteration of the Productivity Commission was described as 'captive to the minister' by stakeholders. It is not to be taken seriously. Submitters to the legislation were generally optimistic about the future opportunities to drive economic growth and enhance productivity in Queensland. With the way this legislation has been drafted, many of them went on to express scepticism and fear around how this would occur.

The commission's capacity to direct its own self-initiated research comes with the caveat that not only may the Treasurer edit the results to fit in with his political agenda but there is no requirement for the findings of the commission to be tabled. Rather, findings will be left to rot in some buried page hidden on the commission's own website. As long as the Productivity Commission remains a neutered political weapon for the Treasurer to control, there is no chance that the Productivity Commission will ever deliver for Queenslanders.