




Speech By
Peter Russo
MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

Record of Proceedings, 2 April 2025

MOTION

Queensland Redistribution Commission, Appointment

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (6.02 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. The Crisafulli government is travelling down a dangerous path—a dangerous path to a time when the seedy underbelly ruled and reached the highest office in this state. As the member for McConnell said, the fish rots from the head. Tony Fitzgerald, the man who changed the very fabric of the political and legal system in this state, proved that nearly 40 years ago. Believe it or not, I was around then. I was working in the courthouse as the Fitzgerald inquiry played out and I watched as politics and the law changed in Queensland for the better. All this is at risk with the appointment of the LNP aligned John Sosso to the Queensland Redistribution Commission.

In the past fortnight, this LNP government have spoken a lot about the future of this state—the opportunities, the legacies—but what they did not mention was their plan to drag Queensland back into the shadows—back in time to the moonlight state, a time of the bagman and gerrymandering. It is deeply concerning, then, that this LNP government, led by Premier Crisafulli, seeks to return to this time through the appointment of Mr Sosso to this position. The move risks undoing the work of corruption buster Tony Fitzgerald. The Premier says he wants to govern with integrity, yet he seeks to undermine the electoral system through the Attorney-General's proposed appointment. As the Clerk would attest, the electoral system is at the heart of any parliamentary democracy.

Let me tell you, the Premier has no integrity—absolutely none. If he did, he would not be entertaining this idea. There are absolutely no question marks over Mr Sosso's ties to the Liberal National Party. He was a member of the LNP. He served as director-general under former premier Borbidge. He served as director-general in the department of justice under Newman, and who could forget Mr Sosso's role in the LNP's bungled boot camps—a legacy of Queensland's worst attorney-general, the member for Kawana. But the member for Kawana did not mind: he brought him back as his right-hand man to serve as his director-general. Mr Sosso is acting like the member for Kawana's new-age bagman—the political bulldozer brought in to do the LNP fixing.

Let's not forget: Mr Sosso was an active player in the Fitzgerald inquiry. He was appointed as secretary to the inquiry but, as has been stated, he was not there for long. Mr Fitzgerald said—

Sosso didn't last long in that role but returned to the Justice Department which, as the Inquiry report notes, did little willingly to assist the Inquiry.

This is the very inquiry the Queensland Redistribution Commission comes from and which Fitzgerald said should be 'conducted by a person or group of people of undoubted integrity whose judgement will be acceptable to all political parties and the general community'.

Mr Sosso was recently included in an article outlining the likely powerbrokers of the incoming Crisafulli government. He was the political appointment on the Administrative Appeals Tribunal by former Liberal senator George Brandis. This is a political appointment through and through. The very idea of this appointment is rotten—rotten to the core, like this Crisafulli LNP government.