



Speech By
Peter Russo
MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

Record of Proceedings, 18 September 2025

JUSTICE, INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (3.17 pm): I rise to speak on the findings of the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee's oversight of the Office of the Information Commissioner for the 2023-24 financial year. I acknowledge all committee members from both sides of the aisle and, in particular, the chair and member for Nicklin. This report, informed by our public hearing on 19 February, highlights both the achievements of the office and the challenges that lie ahead. The Information Commissioner reminded the committee that the office is part of the Queensland integrity framework along with the Auditor-General, the Ombudsman, the Integrity Commissioner and the Crime and Corruption Commission. With only 51 full-time-equivalent staff, the office nonetheless safeguards Queenslanders' right to access government information and protect their personal data from misuse. The commissioner reported that during 2023 her inquiry service responded to nearly 6,000 inquiries, which is an increase of 13.6 per cent on the last financial year. The commissioner further stated—

In 2023-24 we had over 286,000 visits to our website. Our online and in-person training options engaged more than 4,000 participants ...

The commissioner also noted that 80 per cent of the 696 external review applications were resolved informally and 110 privacy complaints were finalised.

Major reform shaped the year. In November 2023 the Queensland parliament amended the Right to Information Act and the Information Privacy Act with the passage of the Information Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Act, which introduced a new single set of privacy principles and a mandatory notification of data breach scheme. A dedicated Information Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Act project team has been developing and designing training sessions and taking those around Queensland, most recently in Beenleigh, Longreach and Winton. The committee also heard about the QPRIME data breach. The commissioner stated—

In December last year, we commenced a review under our regulatory powers under section 135 of the Information Privacy Act ... which is effectively an investigation ...

The commissioner further added—

Section 135 ... provides that I am at liberty to provide a report to the parliament ... and the opportunity to issue a compliance notice ... should that be required.

The commissioner also spoke about artificial intelligence and proffered this advice to government: the government should ensure there are proper privacy and safety mechanisms and it should engage both ethically and with transparency. The Acting Privacy Commissioner reinforced the same, saying—

While it is not mandatory to undertake a privacy impact assessment, our office strongly encourages all agencies to undertake a privacy impact assessment ... and ... to publish those privacy impact assessments to the greatest extent practicable ...

Looking ahead, the commissioner said—

Maintaining our independence is always really critical as an integrity body—

...

There is the issue of sustainable funding—

and—

... grappling with new technologies ... including AI ... using privacy by design and transparency by design ... making sure those systems are secure ...

I would also like to echo the commissioner's words and thank her staff, who are steadfast in their commitment to delivering independent and impartial services to the Queensland community. By supporting the Office of the Information Commissioner, we affirm a fundamental right of our citizens: the right to know how government decisions are made.