Question on Notice
No. 587
Asked on 17 April 2008

MR FINN asked the Member for Callide (MR. SEENEY) –

QUESTION:

In relation to the Freedom of Information (Open Government–Disclosure of Contracts) Amendment Bill, and noting the Government's FOI review is yet to be completed - Since introducing this Bill has he consulted with the Leader of the Opposition about whether to proceed with the Bill and, if so, will he advise the House whether he is going to proceed?

ANSWER:

I congratulate the Member on his first ever question asked on Freedom of Information and trust he will one day ask his own government a question about Freedom of Information and Government transparency.

The Bill was endorsed by both the Joint Party Room and the Shadow Cabinet and therefore has the support of The Nationals and the Liberal Party collectively including the current Leader of the Opposition who himself has been a ceaseless champion of Freedom of Information reform and government transparency.

The Bill will obviously proceed as changes in leadership do not change the Coalition's collective goal to achieve transparency in government.

The Leader of the Opposition did write to the Premier offering support for a freeze on the passing of legislation that impacted on Freedom of Information laws until the current and latest review was complete. However this was rejected by the Premier when she rushed through the Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill which contained amendments to the Freedom of Information Act that widened the scope for secrecy rather than narrowing them.

Additionally, the Member notes that the Government's FOI review is yet to be completed. The Member would be aware that there have been other independent reviews of Freedom of Information laws in Queensland in the past and the key recommendations are still to be implemented. The Premier has given no undertakings to implement the recommendations of the current review either.