

Friday 23 January 2015

The Hon. T.H.Smith QC
Chair Accountability Round Table

Dear Mr Smith,

Thank you for your correspondence on aspects of democratic governance in the 2015 State Election.

Queensland is a great place to live and work and does have a bright future, but with more uncertainty facing the rest of Australia and the world, we need to make sure Queensland stays on track to secure that bright future.

Through strong economic management, we are seeing real progress in health and education, more jobs in a stronger economy, better roads and less crime. And now that we've set the right financial foundations, we're able to truly afford the better schools and hospitals, improved roads and more police our growing State needs.

A re-elected Newman LNP Government will keep working hard to deliver our long term economic plan. We'll keep growing a four pillar economy focusing on agriculture, construction, resources and tourism to deliver more jobs and better services. The LNP is committed to ensuring that Queensland is the safest place to live, work, visit and raise a family.

Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC)

The Government is committed to ensuring that the state's principal crime and corruption fighting body be able to carry out its tasks effectively and efficiently. Faced with a demoralised and floundering Crime and Misconduct Commission the Government sought to reform it so that it would be able to undertake its functions as intended.

Maladministration within the CMC in 2013 led to thousands of confidential and sensitive documents from the Fitzgerald Inquiry being made available to the public, potentially putting witnesses at risk, while others were accidentally shredded

The CMC was being flooded with minor, malicious and vexatious complaints that had very little to do with its corruption or crime fighting responsibilities.

The *Crime and Misconduct Amendment Bill 2014* implemented recommendations arising out of three independent reports that all identified serious issues with the CMC's internal structure, administration, culture and the complaints handling process.

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The requirement that a complaint to the CCC be accompanied with a statutory declaration and the amended definition of 'corrupt conduct' will ensure that the CCC fulfils its role as the body that deals with serious crime and corruption in Queensland. There is no evidence, contrary to your assertion, that the effectiveness of the CCC has been "diminished" by these important amendments. Any evidence your members have of such a change is eagerly awaited.

Electoral reforms – donations

The Government decided to review the *Electoral Act 1992* to ensure it meets high standards of integrity and accountability and that Queensland's electoral laws are fair and effective.

As part of the review, the Government conducted a comprehensive consultation process with the Queensland community.

For consistency with Commonwealth requirements, the disclosure threshold amount has been tied directly to that applying at the Commonwealth level at any given time. This was decided upon receipt of legal advice which cast doubt upon the validity of differing disclosure levels.

Any evidence your members have of any kind of corrupt conduct in relation to donations should be referred to the appropriate authority for immediate action.

Right to Information (RTI)

The Newman LNP Government promised to restore accountability and transparency in Queensland and we have done so through a range of initiatives.

This is the first government in Australia to publicly release the diaries of all Ministers and we also legislated to make lying to Parliament an offence. This offence had been abolished by the Labor Government.

Our open data initiative is making unprecedented amounts of government information available to the public and private sector, while we have made Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee meetings open to the public for the first time.

We put independent public servants in charge of RTI decisions – taking the decision out of the hands of political staffers as it was under Labor. We've been lauded for this decision by independent commentators and media.

The Newman LNP Government has no current plans to amend the right to information legislation in Queensland as you suggest. Unfortunately, this assertion has been made without providing any evidence to support it.

The Newman LNP Government is committed to adhering to the Ministerial Code of Conduct, and prides itself on being open and accountable to all Queenslanders.

While a lot has been achieved across a range of areas during the Government's term, the job is not yet done.

We will be making new policy announcements to enhance the LNP's strong plan for Queensland over the coming days of the election campaign, and I encourage you to continue to monitor the work that we are doing to deliver dividends for Queenslanders that can only come from better economic management and responsible government.

If Queensland goes off track now, the real progress we are starting to see will be at risk.

We cannot afford the political chaos that would occur if Labor flopped over the line with the help of wasted votes on minor parties and independents. That will only make Queensland weaker.

Vote LNP to keep on course for a brighter future and a stronger Queensland.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me and I hope this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



Brad Henderson
State Director