

Legislative Council

Hansard

Tuesday 23 September 2025

The President, Mr Farrell, took the Chair at 11 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

[excerpt...]

MOTION

Routine Disclosure of Ministerial Diaries

[4.56 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) – I move –

- (1) That the Legislative Council notes the resolutions of this House on 28 March 2023 and on 10 September 2024 requesting the Tasmanian Government undertake to introduce mandated requirements for the regular and routine disclosure of all Ministerial and Cabinet Secretary official diaries, detailing scheduled meetings, and their purpose, with stakeholders and organisations, including third parties and lobbyists; and when developing this disclosure regime to also:
 - (a) ensure the process is informed by best practice examples of mandatory disclosure of Ministerial diary requirements established in other jurisdictions, including examples of oversight and compliance requirements; and
 - (b) develop and publicly consult on a proposed Tasmanian mandatory disclosure of Ministerial diaries scheme.

- (2) That the Legislative Council further notes that:
 - (a) The Tasmanian Government failed to report progress to this House by the 28 November last year as requested by 10 September resolution;
 - (b) public consultation on a proposed Tasmanian mandatory disclosure of Ministerial diaries scheme did not occur; and (c) despite the Tasmanian Government introducing quarterly routine disclosure of Ministerial diaries commencing with the January/March 2023 quarter; the current routine disclosures of Ministerial diaries system is not mandatory under statute does not occur in a reliable and timely manner; and the format and details disclosed remain deficient.

- (3) That the Legislative Council also notes, given the failure to implement the Integrity Commission's Lobbyist Code of Conduct reforms this year, the growing urgency for clear, timely and transparent disclosure of lobbying contact between government, advisors and lobbyists.

- (4) And that the Legislative Council calls on the Tasmanian government to:
- (a) undertake comprehensive and public consultation as a priority on a best practice mandatory disclosure of Ministerial diaries model, and that process is to provide for input into the design, disclosure details, timeliness, application, and any other related matter; and
 - (b) report back to the Legislative Council by 5 December 2025 in relation to the above.

Motion 3 may be auspicious. It may be a case of third time lucky. Some members may be wondering why they're experiencing an odd sense of déjà vu at this particular moment. That may be because it's just over a year since this Chamber passed a similar motion, on Tuesday 10 September 2024, requesting the state government undertake a comprehensive and public consultation on a best practice Ministerial diaries disclosure model and to provide the Council with a progress report by 28 November that same year. That was our last scheduled sitting day of that year.

Unfortunately, the government quite shamefully chose to completely snub its nose at the resolution of this place, and that is unacceptable. I take this opportunity to point out that, sadly, such arrogant and disrespectful behaviour is not an aberration in this place. In fact, today we've had some conversations in other aspects of matters on our Notice Paper that reflected similar sentiments. An example, in addition to the ones we've discussed today, the failure to act on the resolution, as passed by this Chamber in September last year, compounds the failure to act in accordance with the initial resolution passed in this place on this same matter that my motion relates to on 28 March 2023, the year before. When added to other unrelated matters, I'm aware of at least six resolutions passed by this place which the government has conveniently chosen to ignore, conveniently, or we might say rudely and disrespectfully.

Now is not the time to go into detail regarding this unfortunate and undemocratic trend. However, I'm placing on the record that to turn a blind eye to such unacceptable behaviour by any government is to be complicit in devaluing the democratic outcomes of this place. I will call out such behaviour whenever I have the opportunity to do so. However, it's worth noting those ignored resolutions occurred under the arrogant and dismissive approach of the government past. In contrast and, optimistically, there does appear to be a different dynamic and a sense of intent surrounding the government present. Hence, I'm hoping that the current government is open to taking a more responsive and respectful approach to the will of this Chamber, with past resolutions acted upon instead of falling on deaf ears.

This raises the question of exactly what the action via responsive and accountable government should look like in response to this motion before us - No. 3 on the Notice Paper. Well, hopefully, future action will not resemble nor repeat parts (1) and (2) of the motion that I note. Part (1) details the failure the previous governments to respect and act on the resolutions passed in this place on 28 March 2023, and subsequently on 10 September 2024, calling for the proposed mandatory Ministerial disclosure scheme to be publicly consulted and also informed by best practice examples from other jurisdictions.

Similarly, part (2) also details the failure the previous government to review or publicly consult on the current non-mandatory disclosure system, and therefore any progress report made to the House by 28 November also failed to materialise. It could have literally been a progress report that said, 'We haven't done it yet.' It could have been, 'Actually, we don't intend

to do it' - but nothing. Not even the courtesy of meeting that expectation that they come back to tell us what they were doing.

Before I move on to part (3) of the motion, I'm just going to briefly discuss why the shortcomings summarised in (1) and (2) matter. A little bit more. I will expound on that. For the benefit of those who are new to this place or watching online who may not be familiar with the debate surrounding the current ministerial diaries disclosure system, I will briefly provide some context. Although lobbying is a central and legitimate activity for the functioning of a democratic system, there has been a growing concern locally, nationally, and internationally regarding the inherent risks of corruption and other undesirable risks associated with it, and the need for effective regulation to mitigate against those risks. I will quote from the OECD on this:

Lobbying is often perceived as an opaque activity of dubious integrity which may result in undue influence, unfair competition, and regulatory capture to the detriment of fair, impartial, and effective policymaking.

The routine disclosure of ministerial diaries is recognised as a key transparency tool, a real boon in our public accountability toolbox. In its 2024 submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration Inquiry into access to Australian Parliament House by lobbyists, the Grattan Institute stated the following:

Ministers are Australia's most senior public policy decision-makers, so meeting with a minister is a particularly privileged opportunity to influence. Publishing ministerial diaries would enable journalists and others to know who ministers are meeting and, perhaps even more importantly, who they are not meeting, which could encourage politicians to seek more diverse input. Ministerial officers should publish details of all official meetings, both in the office and offsite, of scheduled phone calls and all events attended by a minister in an official capacity. Official meetings should include not only those at which a minister was present, but also those held with ministerial advisers only. Records of meetings should identify those present and key issues discussed.

Although that submission was provided to the national parliament, the points made are just as pertinent here in Tasmania in relation to Tasmanian ministers and the Tasmanian community.

On Tuesday 28 March 2023, this chamber resolved to support the proposal that the state government be requested to:

Develop and publicly consult on a proposed Tasmanian Mandatory Disclosure of Ministerial Diary scheme.

That resolution was subsequently conveyed formally to the Premier on that same date. However, instead of the requested consultation process to help inform the most effective disclosure model occurring, the government introduced what is now the current quarterly Diaries Routine Disclosure system, which is administered by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC).

These so-called routine disclosures are released every quarter in arrears. For example, in mid-to-late October 2025 we should see the release of the ministerial diary disclosure for the previous quarter of July-August-September. I caution you, Mr. President, don't hold your

breath on that. Until this morning, the only diaries for this year's disclosures available on the website was the first quarter; that is, January, February and March. They were the only ones that have been disclosed until this morning.

Then the ministerial diaries for April, May and June, which should have been disclosed, I would have said, in mid-to-late July or, to be fair, perhaps mid-August by the latest, to recognise that we had the concurrent caretaker period in place for some of that time, yet, they didn't go up in a timely fashion. They have literally only gone up this morning. Is that a coincidence, I wonder, given we are talking about it today?

I was checking it daily these past couple of weeks, wondering when the April-May-June quarterly ministerial diary disclosure might go up online. I wonder when we might get it, considering it's months late? Lo and behold, there it was this morning when I checked. Immediately, we have a live example, as it were, of why people are frustrated by the lack of reliability and timeliness in the current disclosure system, put in place really just as a stopgap 'go away' measure from the government when I first brought this matter to this place back in 2023. This failing seriously erodes the public's confidence in, as well as the credibility of, both the disclosure system and of the government administering it.

As has been pointed out recently, a lot can happen within a three-month period. Budgets and snap elections can happen in that period. Those aside, we've regularly seen just in the course of normal business in this place, legislation arise, be tabled, be debated and passed in this parliament within a three-month period. What this means, is that under the current system of tardy quarterly disclosures, there's a very real likelihood that the parliament and the public may have no opportunity to be aware of relevant meetings held between government and lobbyists or stakeholders which were germane to the debate of legislation in this place.

Instead of fostering and informing public confidence in good governance practice, this perceived deliberate time lag only serves to undermine confidence in government decision-making. In contrast, let me point to Queensland, which requires monthly disclosure of ministerial diaries.

As many are only too aware, once diaries are disclosed here, the details contained also leave much to be desired. I previously raised in this place an example of the routine diary disclosure for the quarter of 1 October 2023 to 31 December 2023, the final quarter of 2023. I use as an example the then then-deputy premier, treasurer and minister for infrastructure and transport. In that disclosure of that minister's diary there was a total of 120 meeting entries for that three-month period. Only 57 entries contained any content in the purpose column. That leaves almost 48 per cent of meeting entries with the 'purpose' component left empty.

Further, of the 57 diary entries which did have some kind of content provided in the 'purpose' column, 41 of those 57 diary entries which did have some kind of content provided in the 'purpose' column, 41 of those 57 consisted solely of the phrase 'various matters' or 'various issues'. That equates to almost 72 per cent of entries consisting of solely a variation on various matters. It is absolutely farcical. That's deliberate obfuscation by any standard.

In 2024, the Tasmanian Inquirer's analysis of the Premier's diary disclosures for the July-August-September period of 2024 found that - and I put in air quotes here - 'general issues' and 'various issues' or 'various matters' listed as the purpose of meetings in that disclosure 38 times. So much for leading from the front by the Premier.

Let's look at the only example from this year, 2025, that was available, until this morning, that was, of course: the January-February-March quarter of 2025. For this period, the

Premier's disclosed work diary details had a total of 190 entries. Removing from consideration the self-explanatory media entries, there were 156 total ministerial events. Of those 156 work appointments, only 72 had anything put in the 'purpose' column. That's over 53 per cent without a purpose listed.

Of the 72 items which did have a purpose listed, you have a choice of either 'various issues' or 'various matters' listed 66 of 72 times. That equates to 91.6 per cent of the less than half of the Premier's diary entries for the three-month period which had any purpose listed as having either 'various issues' or 'various matters'. Now, I know I've gone on about that a bit, but I can attest even now, from the cursory glance at the disclosures that were put up online this morning for the April to June quarter of this year, the Premier's diary disclosure continues to be littered with 'various matters' in the purpose column.

The government wonders why Tasmanians laugh when they hear claims of this being the 'most transparent government ever'. There is either delusion on steroids occurring here, or gaslighting on an industrial scale, neither of which are remotely appropriate nor acceptable from a government of this state. I shake my head about it. I really do. While our interstate counterparts do not disclose anything as detailed, for example, as meeting minutes under their disclosure scheme or anything inappropriately detailed that some people may want to see, they do, at least in many other jurisdictions, have more context provided when they are detailing the purpose of meetings in their ministerial diary disclosure schemes.

I'll give a very brief example of that: the Victorian Premier's diary disclosure for the April-to-June quarter this year contains numerous entries listed as a 'stakeholder meeting', but with all the individual attendees listed; a level of detail we don't see here. There are also entries with even greater detail, and I'll give an example: a purpose of a meeting held between the Victorian Premier and Swinburne University in this year's April-to-June disclosures has, as the purpose listed:

Discuss jobs and advance manufacturing landscape for the state international student visas and changes to evidence levels.

What there was not, across the entire three months of that Victorian Premier's diary disclosure, was 'various issues' or 'various matters'. Not once. Time does not permit me to detail all the other fascinating and contrasting diary disclosure entries from our interstate counterparts; but suffice to say they do make the current Tasmanian scheme look decidedly opaque, amateurish and half-hearted at best. And in fact, it's hard to not actually read it as cynical at worst.

So far, I've raised concerns about the timeliness or otherwise of our current disclosure system, and I've raised concerns regarding the detail actually disclosed or otherwise; but another limitation of the current system is the scanned PDF document format that each minister's disclosed diary is presented in. It prevents functional searching or cross-referencing of entries. It's not a useful system for the purpose for which people will be using it.

Ideally, we'd have a ministerial diary disclosure database where members of the public could, for example, insert the stakeholder's name and see all the ministers those stakeholders met with during the period according to the diary disclosures. Let's think of a really relevant example here, right now, which no doubt members of the community, members of the relevant industry and members of the media would all be interested in. Let's think about how we might wish to search ministerial diary disclosures for meetings between Tasmanian government ministers and, for example, the RSPCA or Greyhounds Tasmania, between the date of the last election in 2024 and 10 August 2025 when the announcement of the greyhound racing phaseout

was made. A decision that I personally welcome and absolutely confirm here, but which came about, it would appear, as a surprise. The public, the industry, and the media would all be relevantly asking themselves what influenced this decision. Who had access to having a say in this decision? Who was consulted in this decision?

We could take the example of the proposed AFL-demanded Macquarie Point Stadium. Currently, Tasmanians need to trawl through pages of numerous ministerial diaries, including the Premier, the Minister for Infrastructure, the Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal, and maybe the Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events, to see where relevant stakeholders on that matter, involved in that debate, may have received access to a relevant ministerial ear.

In the Grattan Institute senate committee submission I mentioned earlier, the point is also made, and I quote again:

To be useful, ministerial diaries must be published in a timely manner and in an accessible form. For example, all meetings for one month could be published by the end of the following month, as already happens in Queensland. The publication should be searchable and exportable to facilitate scrutiny.

It is worth noting the New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption, in its 2021 report investigation into the regulation of lobbying, access, and influence in NSW, also raised concerns over the format of disclosures. Stating, and I quote:

An equally important matter to proper disclosure concerns accessibility. In its current format as PDF files, diary data is not easily accessible or searchable. This further reduces the utility of disclosures and makes analysis more difficult.

Clearly other jurisdictions have noted the same limitations in the format issue. Clearly, there is an opportunity to improve, here and elsewhere, and we can look to jurisdictions that do it well. In a digital age, the scanned document, or PDF format, is unnecessarily cumbersome.

This also leads me to part three of the motion, noting the significance and urgency for meaningful ministerial diary disclosure reform in the absence of the anticipated Integrity Commission reforms to our lobbyist code of conduct and register, as recognised by the recent 2024 Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration and their inquiry into the access of lobbyists to the Australian parliament. Ministerial diary disclosures allow for valuable cross referencing, not just across ministerial portfolios but also with disclosures made by lobbyists via those relevant codes of conduct and registers.

Unfortunately, in the absence of the Integrity Commission's intended reforms to our lobbyists register and code of conduct, all we currently have is a list of registered lobbyists in this state. A list of registered lobbyists does not tell us whether lobbyists receive disproportionate and privileged access to decision makers. A list does not shine a light on when and how often they may be securing the ears of government or regarding what policy matter.

Nor does it tell us whether lobbyists' access is well-balanced, partially, or not at all with NGO and community stakeholders, for example. Without a comprehensive and accessible ministerial diary disclosure system, there is no other mechanism other than the time consuming RTI system for the public to see and scrutinise the access and potential influence over government decision-making that lobbyists and vested interests may have. This in turn risks undermining confidence that decisions are being made in the public interest.

I will take this opportunity to stress I do not believe it's a case of either/or when it comes to ministerial diary disclosure and the important lobbyist code of conduct and register reforms

we should be putting in place here, as designed by our Integrity Commission. Ideally, Tasmanians would have both an accessible and rigorous ministerial diary disclosure scheme operating alongside an equally robust lobbyist code of conduct and register, but the absence of the latter highlights even more urgently the need for a comprehensive review of the former, as called for in this motion.

That leads me to the fourth and final part of the current motion. Part 4A calls on the government to undertake, as a priority, comprehensive public consultation, seeking input on the design of a mandatory best-practise ministerial diary disclosure system, which may address the current limitations experienced in timeliness, content, accessibility, and searchability, which I've just outlined. Maybe others that are raised during such a consultation. I am certainly not giving an exhaustive list here, just an indicative one.

As I've also discussed, this is a vital step which this Chamber recognised in the initial 2023 resolution, which the government has so far refused to undertake. The shortcut did not work. It's now clear that leapfrogging that vital step was a false economy and was at the expense of transparency, accountability and communities' confidence. I reiterate my assessment made during a previous debate, that currently we have a ministerial diaries dissimulation racket rather than a genuine disclosure model.

I also reiterate, that this recently election washed watch us turn a new leaf government still has considerable ground to cover to re earn Tasmanian's trust and confidence, particularly when it comes to genuine transparency and accountability. The motion before us today presents a real and meaningful stepping stone towards rebuilding that community trust.

I have stated previously, and reiterate now, it's considered standard and best practise in the community and private sectors to routinely undertake periodic reviews of programs and initiatives. There's no shame for a government or a parliament to also do so. Rather, it's professional and response and responsible approach to take. Further, it's also considered responsible and best practise to consult with affected stakeholders when undertaking such periodic reviews looking for improvement and progress.

It is in that context I once again, for the third time in as many years, seek to provide Tasmanians with a say in making our ministerial diary disclosure system mandatory and which provides meaningful information in an accessible and timely manner. What does the community need to see and within what time frame for the disclosure model to inform them usefully and in a timely way and crucially, to restore confidence in our system of governments, governance and political decision making?

I am conscious the Chamber has a range of important items still listed for debate and although there's many examples, I could cite eminent persons to quote in support of a rigorous and timely ministerial diary disclosure regime, I will instead begin to wrap up this contribution to hear if other members may also like to make contributions and leave space for that.

We all know hindsight is a beautiful and yet frustrating thing. I cannot help thinking that if the first of the requests passed by this place on the 28 March 2023 had been respected and acted upon by the then government, we possibly would not be having this third time lucky debate now.

While I do not endorse needless repetition in this place, surely the government can see by now that I will not be giving up or backing down on this matter. I feel too strongly that Tasmanians deserve better than the minimalist PDF scans they have previously been served up in an incredibly untimely fashion by former iterations of this government.

Tasmanians deserve better in attitude and respect for democratic votes which occur in this place and the broader Parliament. Tasmanians also deserve more comprehensive, rigorous and reliable transparency and accountability mechanisms. It should not be too difficult for a government led by a Premier who likes to claim that they are the most transparent government ever, why is this so difficult that it requires three votes in as many years?

Ms Forrest - Let's hope it's only three.

Ms WEBB - Ultimately, all this motion is calling for is that we have a ministerial diary disclosure system which lives up to its name. It's worth emphasising the call for a ministerial diary disclosure scheme is not contentious in itself. This is transparency and accountability mechanisms that are accepted in principle, broadly, widely and without question

However, whether and how the implementation of this transparency mechanism meets community expectation is a matter of contention, of serious and growing contention. It's not good enough to do what if I wasn't in this place I might call a half something effort, but here I'd use a different term that was more parliamentary. It's not coming to mind, but a far from adequate effort and pretend that you have done what was requested. It's just not good enough.

We hear about whitewashing or greenwashing; those terms are used to describe the efforts of involved vested interests or other corporate stakeholders seeking to usurp the intent of a genuine movement and claim some form of social licence that's actually just skin deep. It's unwarranted and undeserved. It's performative and misleading.

Instead of the intent of whitewashing or greenwashing is to control perception, to control the message without undertaking the fundamental change that's necessary and this is similar. I think similarly in cases where governments seeking to control community accountability expectations and to usurp the momentum that's there in the cry from community for more accountability and more genuine transparency.

We are seeing performative transparency, faux transparency producing quarterly PDF documents of which 91 per cent of the included purposes of meetings consist of either 'various issues' or 'various matters' can only be described as performative transparency, at best. It does not reflect genuine intent nor respect for the community's right to be able to inform itself on whether vested interests are receiving privileged access and are benefiting at the cost of public interest. Hence, this motion seeks for Tasmanians to be consulted over and to have input into how best to make our disclosure system genuine, accessible, timely and robust.

It is important to note, this motion does not seek to impose any particular ministerial diary disclosure model. None. I am not dictating what the outcome of this should be. Today's debate is not about those of us in this place declaring we know what a viable and mandatory best practice system should look like when it comes to ministerial diary disclosure. I have provided some thoughts and ideas, but I am not dictating an outcome. I am not trying to impose a model here and now. The motion is very reasonable. It's the third time it's been very reasonable. It doesn't even dictate a deadline for the full activity to occur and a result to come out the other end of it. It just makes a request for public consultation to be undertaken and begun and for there to be a report back to this place, before we rise for this year, on where that's up to; on how progress is going.

To be very clear, there's no room for misapprehension or misinterpretation. The motion's final paragraph, (4)(b), merely requires a formal update on progress to be provided to the Council by 5 December 2025. This may take the form of update on who will be, for example, undertaking the review, or what the expected time frame might be, or the proposed

public consultation process, or whatever. It is just a report back on progress. It is a minimum ask, really, that should demonstrate genuine intent. Whatever the content of that report back, in order for it to comply with the intent of the spirit of this, it does require that some action along the lines described here is undertaken.

In September 2024, I stood here and said:

A truly transparent and accountable government committed to delivery of democratic good governance would not think twice of undertaking such a consultation. It certainly wouldn't take being asked twice to do so.

For the third consecutive year, I seek to put that same request a third time. I commend this motion to the House.

[6.01 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - I don't think Hansard indicates steam coming out of one's ears, Mr President, in this place.

Ms Forrest - We can describe it, though.

Ms WEBB - Perhaps I can just note for the record.

Ms Forrest - That steam is coming out of your ears?

Ms O'Connor - You're steaming.

Ms WEBB - Steam. Unbelievable. Mr President, let me thank members for contributions on the motion. I appreciate the member for Murchison's comprehensive contribution and her reiteration that we should expect a formal response to this very reasonable request. The contribution from the government certainly doesn't constitute that. If this motion passes this place today, it's a formal communication from this Chamber to the government, and it requires a response accordingly.

Ms Forrest - It's the respectful thing to do.

Ms WEBB - It is the respectful thing to do, and if the government expects this place to do its business, it should also respectfully engage with the business of this place that goes through on private members' days, including motions that call for a response. I appreciate the contribution from the member for Murchison, and her reiteration of the principles underpinning this motion, and its importance, its clarity and its straightforward simplicity. It's not controversial. It's not particularly onerous. It's reasonable and it's actually just standard good practice.

Thank you to the member for Hobart for the contribution on the motion. I appreciated your highlighting of the fact that public interest should sit at the heart of everything we do and everything our government does in its role on behalf of the Tasmanian community, and that we need transparency to demonstrate public interest being pursued and delivered.

I agree with the various examples that the member for Hobart provided of the challenges we face in Tasmania in relation to inappropriate influence into our political space and our decision making, particularly from vested interests. We see blatant examples of policy capture and regulatory capture. It is absolutely imperative that we build a scaffolding of transparency and integrity measures. We must try to work against and mitigate the risks

involved in eroding our democracy through the sort of influence that can be brought to bear when you are opaque, and doing the business of government behind closed doors, without proper public visibility and the opportunity for scrutiny and oversight from this place and from the community itself.

I appreciate the member for Hobart pointing to the RTI report. I find it very interesting that the government's contribution in relation to that report came out today. I'll have a bit more to say about that in a minute. It is an interesting report that's come out today. I've had a read of the executive summary thus far, and I believe the pieces the member for Hobart read out in her contribution were highly relevant to here. That report absolutely concurs with the intent of this motion and the importance of changing culture around matters of transparency and integrity and accountability. The government is doing nothing to demonstrate that it is changing the culture on those fronts, including in its response thus far to the RTI report.

This brings me to the government's contribution, Mr President. Again, the government defaults to listing things it is doing - which is completely irrelevant to the core of this motion and to its responsibilities in responding to this motion. It points to quarterly reporting of ministerial diaries, which only occurred the first time this motion was brought to this place in 2023 - and it was brought in as a bit of 'integrity washing'. It's as simple as that. You're being asked to do something, you know this Chamber was going to call on the government to do it, so instead of genuinely engaging with that motion the first time and doing a consultation and coming up with a model that was through a warranted and appropriate process, it jumped in to do a voluntary model.

Rather than pat itself on the back about that, the government should be ashamed of this integrity washing that it tried to do. To voluntarily put in place a model that you know to be absolutely dysfunctional in delivering the intent of having such a model is absolutely pernicious in further eroding public trust in government.

To say that we've regularly discussed this model is absolutely ridiculous from the government. As if that's a positive. The only times we've discussed it are when I brought these motions to this place to point out the insufficiencies of the voluntary, untimely, and pretty much useless model the government put in place as its piece of integrity washing. Those are the only time we've discussed it, and every time the government has said they're against the motion and refused to improve their utterly useless current voluntary model.

This is where we have crossover with the RTI report that came out today - to say, here in this place, in its contribution, for the government to say that if people need more detail than the 'various matters' or 'various issues' listed as a purpose in the current disclosure model, they can then go ahead and RTI it, or maybe give the Premier a call is the worst kind of nonsense. It's offensive for the government to say such a thing.

What the RTI report by Prof Rick Snell and Prof Tim McCormack makes very clear is that RTI should be the last resort, that there should be a proactive culture of information release. It should be the third tier of having to ask for information. You shouldn't have to ask for it.

To turn around and have the government say in this place today that as far as they're concerned, if people want to know more than 'various matters' as the purpose of a meeting between a government minister and potentially a vested interest stakeholder, 'they can RTI it', that is just offensive to its core, Mr President. It's entirely against what's being recommended in that RTI report today, so I can't wait to see what the government's going to do in response to that report, because on the basis of what we've heard here today, they're going to do - not much.

Ms Forrest - I was about to stop you saying something you wish you hadn't.

Ms WEBB - It was going to be an unparliamentary expression, but it's going to be not much, not much at all. If they're going around telling people to go RTI these meetings, rather than have them straightforwardly put some basic information in the public domain, that is just absolutely reprehensible.

Ms Forrest - How would you know what to RTI, anyway?

Ms WEBB - Exactly right. You just shouldn't have to. It's just ridiculous. To say there are various models around the country is true, but it's also a complete excuse. We are one of the worst. To claim that there is no model that's best practice is utterly rubbish. There's plenty of information available. We have expert academics who have provided numerous submissions through numerous inquiries and different sorts of examinations of this issue available on the public domain across various jurisdictions.

Our very own Integrity Commission has made it patently clear what should be in a ministerial diary disclosure scheme. For the government to say, 'There's no information available,' - that's the quote I have from the government's contribution about what would constitute best practice. Absolute rubbish. Clearly, they haven't read a thing from our state integrity entity, the Integrity Commission. Haven't cared to read, perhaps, a thing from our Integrity Commission on this topic. Absolutely ridiculous. Of course, we know exactly the features that would be included in a best practice model here for a ministerial diary disclosure scheme. We could absolutely adapt those features most relevantly to fit this jurisdiction. That's exactly what a consultation process would provide us the opportunity to do - to tailor the principles of well-known best practice in this place to fit here.

That's why I've called for consultation on it, so that nobody's dictating what the outcome should be. We should discuss what it should look like here, knowing clearly the publicly available best practice approaches that are readily available to any government that isn't covering its eyes and blocking its ears and saying, 'La, la, la, la, la.' That's what this government's doing when it comes to genuine transparency, to genuine integrity, to genuine accountability. They're putting their fingers in their ears, they're closing their eyes and they're saying, 'La, la, la, la, la. We're doing something. Let me list the things.' Oh, my goodness me, Mr President. Steam is coming out of my ears.

To then refer to a whole range of matters relating to the Right to Information Uplift Project, clearly the speech was written for the Leader, and I appreciate the Leader reading out the speech provided to her by the government. However, that speech was clearly written not even knowing the RTI report was going to come out today, because to point out that we are successfully doing things in that space made a mockery of the report coming out today.

There's so much improvement that's required in that area. While the RTI Uplift Project has been a positive start on some matters, and the report says that too, there is so much more to be done to deliver the intent of a genuine RTI system based on the legislation we have. To begin to pat ourselves on the back about what we're currently doing, it's just effectively a bit of a 'look over here, look over here' moment for the government today in relation to this motion.

The RTI report today identifies clearly directions for us to take. I can already read the writing on the wall that this government is not in the slightest bit interested in taking any of them based on its response to this motion and the sorts of things it's happy to pat itself on the back about in terms of our current RTI system.

Talk about an absolute joke. To talk about continuing to strengthen the government's transparency agenda. This is a government that has yet to demonstrate any genuine interest in a transparency agenda. If the government was remotely interested in the transparency agenda, it would be welcoming this motion. It would be acknowledging it is a straightforward very reasonable request, and it would want to deliver the outcome that's being intended from it.

As the member for Hobart said, good governments have nothing to hide. Good ministers have nothing to hide. They would be welcoming this, they would be engaged with doing it instead of saying we can't imagine what a best practise model might be. They would actually understand that the best practise model principles are there readily available. They would be going to look for them and they would be keen to put them in place and have Tasmania be the best, the best jurisdiction in the country.

We could get there quite easily from where we are now. We could get there if there was genuine intent, if there was genuine interest in inner transparency agenda rather than just performative faux transparency, which is government clearly intends to continue to deliver.

That was a disgraceful contribution from the government. We'd laugh if it wasn't so disgraceful, but we can't laugh about it. I hope members will recognise it's actually appropriate for our Chamber, on behalf of the Tasmanian community that we represent, to be always working for improvement when it comes to government accountability, when it comes to accountability around ministerial decision making and when it comes to just basic architecture of good governance and integrity in this state.

We're putting this in place for today, we're putting it in place for tomorrow, we're putting it in place for this government, but we're putting it in place for future governments too. I invite members to support this motion for the third time, essentially and I invite the government to have a good hard look at itself on this.

If this is passed for a third time in this Chamber, I invite the government to take it seriously and respect this, the call of this Chamber and to do work that is entirely in the benefit of the Tasmanian community. To the benefit of public interest and ultimately, to the benefit of the government, quite frankly, where it can actually point to where it's walking the talk rather than just integrity washing itself through faux measures.

But before I bring my contribution to a close, I've been asked to move to adjourn this debate for the purposes of a dinner break, and then we resume here after.

Ms Lovell - You might get a second wind.

Ms WEBB - I might, you never know.

Mr President, I move –

That the debate be now adjourned.

[6.15 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I thought we were going to deal with this motion and then go to dinner rather than adjourn it now. I'm not sure why. Everyone who was going to speak has spoken. I'm just clarifying whether it makes sense to adjourn the debate at this point or deal with this motion and then adjourn for dinner break.

Mr PRESIDENT - We have a couple of options. You can either keep it adjourned, and we'll come back and start again, or you can withdraw and then I'll put the question and then the Leader will move that –

[6.16 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I thought I was being asked to do it because otherwise we'd move on to the next business and we wanted to have a break. I'm going to withdraw my adjournment. I'm going to finish my contribution and ask members to support the motion that's before the House.

Motion agreed to.