

# Independent blasts call to table diaries



Independent member of the Legislative Council Meg Webb.

## Sue Bailey

Independent member of the Legislative Council Meg Webb has described a call for non-government MPs to release their diaries as “childish” – and says she won’t be making hers public.

Premier Jeremy Rockliff announced last week that details of ministerial diaries will be released monthly instead of quarterly and be easier to search under transparency reforms and challenged non-government MPs to meet the same standards.

Ms Webb said government ministers had powers that non-government members do not have, “including the power to move money bills which no other MP can do”.

“If the government wants to provide non-government MPs



Premier Jeremy Rockliff wants non-government MPs to open their work diaries.

the keys to Treasury and decision making powers over which corporations to prop up and which community services to cut, then of course we should disclose whether we are meeting the beneficiaries and losers of those decisions while those decisions are being made,” she said.

“Once the government gives me the Treasury keys so

I can issue grants and prop up corporations, or allow me into Cabinet meetings where secret deals I may make can be hidden behind ‘Cabinet in confidence’ for years, then I would disclose my diary.

“This is a childish and belittling call by the Premier, who well knows that ministers are making formal policy and expenditure decisions on behalf

of the state, which is why they are lobbied by big corporations and other key stakeholders and non-government members are not.”

Ms Webb, who successfully lobbied for disclosure of ministerial diaries, said in overseas and interstate jurisdictions people knew “who was in the room, when, how often, and what about”.

“Importantly, this transparency mechanism also makes clear who has not been invited into the government’s room,” she said.

“The timely publication of ministerial diaries may encourage those in power to be more inclusive or balanced when consulting on potential funding arrangements or legislative decisions, and in that regard diary disclosures are not only an anti-corrup-

tion tool but can also encourage better and fairer public policy.

“When the Premier announced in November 2024 his shocking backflip on the promised pokies mandatory precommitment card, we didn’t find out until February the following year that in the weeks leading up to that announcement both the Premier and the Treasurer attended multiple THA events, without meeting once with gambling reform organisations.”

Ms Webb welcomed the Premier’s commitment but said the “proof will be in the pudding”. “I give cautious welcome to the undertaking there will be more meeting details disclosed, because honestly the government is starting from a pretty low bar currently ...”

susan.bailey@news.com.au