



PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE

Members present:

Hon. ML Furner MP—Chair
Hon. SM Fentiman MP
Mr MA Hunt MP
Mr JJ McDonald MP
Ms JC Pugh MP
Mr RA Stevens MP
Hon. AJ Stoker MP

Staff present:

Ms L Manderson—Committee Secretary
Ms H Radunz—Assistant Committee Secretary

MEETING WITH THE CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMISSION

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 16 October 2025

Brisbane

THURSDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2025

The committee met at 8.33 am.

CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. My name is Mark Furner, member for Ferny Grove and chair of the committee. Joining me today is: the Hon. Amanda Stoker, member for Oodgeroo and deputy chair; Mr Marty Hunt, member for Nicklin; Mr Jim McDonald, member for Lockyer; Ms Jess Pugh, member for Mount Ommaney; Mr Ray Stevens, member for Mermaid Beach; and the Hon. Shannon Fentiman, member for Waterford, who is participating in today's proceedings as a substitute for the member for Gladstone, the Hon. Glenn Butcher, who is unavailable.

I would like to begin by respectfully acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet here today. The committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and are subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. As parliamentary proceedings, under the standing orders, any person may be excluded from today's meeting at the discretion of the chair or by order of the committee.

The proceedings are being recorded by Hansard and broadcast live on the parliament's website. I ask everyone participating in today's proceedings to ensure they turn their microphone on before speaking and off once they have finished to ensure they can be heard clearly and the proceedings are accurately captured for broadcast and transcript purposes.

Media may be present and will be subject to the chair's direction at all times. The media rules endorsed by the committee are available from committee staff. All those present today should note that it is possible you may be filmed or photographed by the media during the proceedings, and images may also appear on the parliament's website or social media pages. Before we proceed, I ask everyone present to please turn their mobile phones off or switch them to silent mode.

The purpose of today's proceedings is to enable the committee to engage with the CCC in relation to recent public statements it has issued regarding its activities in respect of the investigation of Mr Troy Thompson, the former mayor of the Townsville City Council. The committee will commence its proceedings in public. However, recognising there are limits on the extent to which the CCC may be able to comment publicly on these matters, the committee will necessarily move into private proceedings to further our discussions in a confidential setting as appropriate. Given the time, I caution members to not have any lengthy preambles with regard to their questions because I will jump on that fairly quickly.

I adopt the agenda as moved. All those in favour? Carried. No apologies are noted.

BARBOUR, Mr Bruce, Chairperson, Crime and Corruption Commission

CAPPER, Mr Craig, Senior Executive Officer (Corruption), Crime and Corruption Commission

CHAIR: For the public meeting with the Crime and Corruption Commission with these administrative matters being dealt with, I now welcome the Chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission, Mr Bruce Barbour, and Senior Executive Officer (Corruption), Mr Craig Capper. Thank you for making yourselves available at such short notice. Over to you.

Mr Barbour: Good morning, Chair, and committee members. As the committee will appreciate, I am currently limited in terms of what I can say in a public meeting about this investigation. The CCC is acutely aware of the significant public interest in this investigation. Notwithstanding this, we must, at all times, act in accordance with the law, our obligations under the Crime and Corruption Act, and at all times independently, impartially and fairly. Given this, I think it would be helpful to the committee to explain fully the reasoning behind the two recent public statements that we have made about the investigation.

The first was issued on 26 September 2025, following the former mayor of Townsville's resignation, and the second was issued yesterday. As the committee is aware, there is a new legislative framework in the Crime and Corruption Act 2001 which provides authority for the CCC to

make public statements and also public reports. In relation to a decision to issue a public statement, the CCC is required to consider various factors which are outlined in section 65A(4) of the Crime and Corruption Act.

We considered it was appropriate to release the public statement on 26 September on the following basis: the allegations being investigated by the CCC are serious, and we considered a public statement was required to address comments made by both the former mayor and the minister which were in the public domain. The statement does not disclose any specific information arising from the investigation, and is discrete in that it confirms the CCC is investigating allegations concerning the former mayor, and that the CCC can continue to investigate those allegations regardless of the former mayor's resignation; that it did disclose information to the minister so that she could carry out her duties under the Local Government Act; and that, until such time as the investigation was finalised, the CCC did not propose to comment further.

The statement was not considered to prejudice any proceeding or future proceeding. The statement does not prejudice the investigation, given that it was at its end stage and has been in the overt phase for a period of time. The statement was considered to be the most appropriate means to release information, given the public comments and discussion about the CCC's investigation.

Whilst the former mayor is named in the statement, this is justified because: as the former mayor of Townsville, he is of the standing and status that warrants greater public scrutiny; the former mayor had released several media statements of his own, including on the same day as the CCC's statement was made, specifically referring to the CCC's investigation; and it was considered that the statement would not unreasonably damage the former mayor's health, safety or wellbeing, given that it only addresses discrete matters which the former mayor had raised in relation to the matters.

Yesterday, the CCC made another public statement. That statement was following the receipt of 24 September final advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions and following the completion of the investigation and the preparation of a public report, issued consistent with the procedural fairness provisions of our act. The investigation was thorough and included the collection and review of: 29 relevant witness statements; 21 digital devices and nine cloud data downloads; over 6,800 electronic documents; over 8,700 WhatsApp messages; over 2,480 pages of medical records; and over 300 media and social media videos.

Before deciding to make that statement, we considered the factors in section 65A(4) of the Crime and Corruption Act and those considerations included the former mayor's alleged conduct, including the fact that the CCC has been investigating and it has been reported in the media on various occasions over the past 12 months. The matter has been the subject of increased media interest recently, following the former mayor's resignation on 26 September 2025 and his announcement shortly after declaring that he intended to nominate to contest the next election, scheduled for 15 November 2025.

The alleged conduct of the former mayor is serious. Public interest and community standards and considerations weigh in favour of a greater level of transparency and disclosure as the allegations involve an elected representative.

The CCC has concluded its investigation into the allegations involving the former mayor. The public statement will not impact on any ongoing investigation, and it does not contain any critical commentary or expression of opinion concerning the former mayor. The statement is also not considered to unreasonably interfere with the former mayor's privacy or reputation. A draft public report has been prepared and is considered necessary to ensure accountability, transparency and integrity in government.

I hope that this further information is of assistance to the committee. I am happy to answer any questions, but, of course, I may be limited to some extent in what I can say in the public session.

I reiterate—I may have misstated the number—but there were over 6,800,000 electronic documents as part of the investigation. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Barbour, for that concise statement. I will start with a couple of questions with respect to the draft report. Given your obligations under the act in section 64A, there is a list of procedures to go through with respect to former mayor of Townsville, Troy Thompson. Given the urgency of this matter with a by-election on 15 November, could you advise the committee the period of time required to work through the obligations under section 64A of the act, please?

Mr Barbour: The draft report was prepared within six days of our final contact and discussions with the Director of Public Prosecutions. Those discussions around the advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions concluded on 1 October. We moved very quickly to prepare a draft report and

we provided that to relevant persons on 8 October. The provisions in relation to sections 69A, 69B and 69C relate to the circumstances which follow from the preparation and delivery of that report to affected parties, and that sets out a time line by which people have the opportunity to consider matters and possibly refer submissions back to us for consideration.

CHAIR: To be clear, in your view, there is a lengthy process to go through before the CCC would obtain a response back from Troy Thompson?

Mr Barbour: I am not sure I would describe the process as lengthy, but it is the timeline that is set out in the act. In the act, there is a 30-day timeline that is presented in relation to certain aspects of a person affected, and that person can seek an extension of time for up to 60 days. If the CCC does not agree to grant the extension, there is the possibility, within the act, for an individual to seek that to be reviewed by the Supreme Court.

CHAIR: Thank you. One last question before I hand over to the deputy chair. Will this matter be referred to the DPP?

Mr Barbour: This matter has already been referred to the DPP. As I indicated in my opening, we received final advice from the DPP at the end of September, and our discussions with the DPP concluded by way of a meeting on 1 October.

Mrs STOKER: Thank you, Mr Barbour and Mr Capper, for your time today. With all of those things in mind, and noting that you do not have control over the speed with which people seize the timelines for those procedural fairness provisions, do you envisage having something that can be provided publicly ahead of 15 November?

Mr Barbour: It is really not possible for me to answer that question, not because it needs to be answered in private but simply because there are so many potential issues that might arise. Following the issuing of the report, the earliest that we would be able to envisage tabling a public report would be 7 November, but that date does not include the possibility of formal requests for extensions of time. It does not include the possibility of litigation being initiated either to extend time or for some other reason. It also does not allow time for us to consider in detail any substantial submissions that are made which need to be carefully considered and weighed up in accordance with the act. Unfortunately, I cannot give a precise timeline in relation to that. There is a possibility that it could be tabled before the election date, and certainly from our perspective we can see a clear public interest in that happening. Unfortunately, we must act according to law and follow the steps that are set out in the act.

Ms FENTIMAN: Mr Barbour, you mentioned that the matters had been referred to the DPP and that you have now had advice back from the DPP. Was the DPP's advice to prosecute Mr Thompson?

Mr Barbour: Any questions in relation to details about the DPP's advice would be best left to the private session of the meeting.

Ms FENTIMAN: There is nothing that you can provide us about the advice you received?

Mr Barbour: What I can indicate hypothetically is that in all likelihood a public report would not be prepared were we going to proceed to prosecution because that would potentially prejudice any proceedings of a criminal nature that we brought. In relation to this particular matter, there are complex issues involved, and I am more than happy to deal with those in private session.

Mr STEVENS: You mentioned that matters of justice and fairness have to be progressed from this point forward before public disclosures can be made in terms of the outcomes of the report. Do you have a timeframe for when those matters of justice and fairness will be completed so that you can advise the public on the outcomes of your report?

Mr Barbour: As I indicated to the deputy chair, the very earliest that we would potentially be able to report on the matter is 7 November, but I cannot guarantee that as a timeline because there are so many variables in place, depending on what happens as a result of the procedural fairness process. I cannot give a precise date. We must ensure we follow the requirements of the legislation. The CCC cannot act contrary to law. We must follow the steps that have been introduced as a result of the amendments to our public reporting processes, and we must ensure our application of those provisions and our response in these matters are appropriate, fair and with integrity.

Mr STEVENS: Just to be clear: in your earlier answer in relation to the referral to the DPP, you mentioned that any referral to the DPP, which is part of the process under the legislation, would impede any further prosecutions if you put out that report; is that correct? You have referred it to the DPP for their opinion on the matter, so that would prejudice any further prosecution case that may come before the courts?

Mr Barbour: No, that is not strictly correct. Under our act, we now must seek the advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions in any matter prior to making a decision about whether or not prosecution will be formally recommended and introduced. If the DPP does not form a view that prosecution is appropriate in the circumstances the CCC is prohibited from initiating any prosecution proceedings.

Ms PUGH: Troy Thompson has announced his intention to stand in the upcoming by-election. As I understand it, nominations close today and the ballot draw is at 2.30 today. Is he still eligible to run for mayor in the current circumstances? Could we have a situation where he is re-elected and then potentially has to stand down at a later date?

Mr Barbour: I am not aware of any reasons at this point in time which would prevent Mr Thompson from nominating for election. It is not an area of my responsibility, obviously; that would be a matter for the Electoral Commissioner. In relation to the second part of your question, it is hypothetical at this stage. All of these matters must be judged on a case-by-case basis, and it would depend on the specific circumstances that happened in due course.

Ms FENTIMAN: Mr Barbour, your statement confirms that you briefed the local government minister on this investigation and provided her with information that you had collected during your investigation. Were there any limitations on the minister then using that information? If so, could you outline to us what those limitations were?

Mr Barbour: As indicated in our public statement, we did provide information to the minister, pursuant to section 60(2) of our act. The minister has formal statutory obligations and responsibilities in relation to councillors. In relation to Mr Thompson, there was already a suspension in place. That suspension was for a finite period, and the minister was obligated to consider what she should or should not do in relation to that matter. We provided information that was available and appropriate to provide to the minister to assist her in her deliberations under the act. That is something we do regularly for agencies and ministers, particularly in relation to discipline matters, so they are fully apprised of any issues which are relevant to the decisions that they must make.

The information was provided to the minister specifically for the purposes of her statutory functions, giving her the opportunity to provide that information to advisers or appropriate people who were involved in that process and to subsequently provide it should she decide to issue a notice to Mr Thompson. Beyond her statutory functions, it was made clear to the minister that, because the investigation was ongoing, there was no provision for her to not respect that confidentiality and the restrictions we had placed on the provision of the material. I am unaware of what, if any, restrictions were placed by the minister on the information provided to Mr Thompson. I am not in a position to know whether Mr Thompson was free to provide that information publicly or whether there was a restriction in place which did not allow him to do that.

CHAIR: Mr Barbour, in your opening statement you indicated that you provided the information to persons other than the minister. Who were the other persons who were provided the information?

Mr Barbour: No, that was a reference to persons in relation to the draft public report. That was provided to appropriate persons.

CHAIR: Can you identify who those persons were?

Mr Barbour: They were two individuals whom we believed needed to be provided with information relating to the draft public report as a result of what is required under the act. I am limited in terms of what I can say in public, but I am happy to provide the committee with some more detail in relation to that during the private session.

CHAIR: I will look forward to that, thank you.

Mr STEVENS: In your report, Mr Barbour, you clarified that the minister was unable to release the information disclosed to her by the CCC, having been specifically restricted from taking this course of action by the CCC. If the CCC had restricted the minister from giving that information out, would the minister also not be able to give Mr Thompson that information?

Mr Barbour: No, not at all. The information given to her with restrictions in place was clearly for her statutory functions. One of those statutory functions is to make decisions in relation to either suspending or removing councillors. She was permitted to use the information for that purpose and that process.

Ms FENTIMAN: Was anyone else present with the minister when you briefed her on your investigation?

Mr Barbour: We met with the minister on 1 July. At that meeting, there were a number of other people present who had a direct relationship to advising the minister and acting on her advice. It was a limited and small group.

Ms FENTIMAN: The decision to brief the minister and the timing of that decision has precipitated a show cause notice, for which the minister has statutory obligations. The timing of this has meant that people will be voting in a matter of weeks without any information about your investigation into Troy Thompson. Was any consideration given to the timing of briefing the minister, which has triggered a show cause notice, a resignation and a by-election in which the people of Townsville will be voting for an individual who is still the subject of what you say is an incredibly serious investigation?

Mr Barbour: I do not think anybody envisaged the circumstances which led to the calling of a by-election. However, the purpose and timing of providing the information to the minister was because she had to complete her statutory obligations within a fixed period, given the current suspension timeline that was in place. There needed to be some time to prepare a show cause notice, for example, and to provide procedural fairness to the individual on whom it was issued. I do not remember the precise date the period of suspension was to end, but I think it was in November. Working backwards from that date, that was relevant to the timing of all of those issues.

Ms PUGH: There has been quite considerable media interest in the minister and Troy Thompson. I have an article here, published yesterday on the ABC, stating that Mr Thompson has been provided with a summary of CCC allegations but he has not made the material public despite the local government minister encouraging him to do so. He cited CCC legislation as preventing him from doing that. I recognise you partially answered this earlier with my colleague's question, but when somebody is the subject of an investigation and provided with some information from that investigation in a show cause notice, what limitations are there on that person on releasing that information? It is very unclear from the different commentary that has been made in the media and I think it is very confusing for people.

Mr Barbour: In asking that question, I think you have actually conflated two specific things. If I can break them up. As I said before, in relation to the minister's show cause notice to Mr Thompson, I have no detail about that at all. I do not know what was provided to Mr Thompson. I have not seen it. It would be inappropriate for me to see it. As I said earlier, I do not know whether or not there were any restrictions placed on that by the minister to Mr Thompson. I am aware of media reports that say that the minister suggested that Mr Thompson should release that information so I am assuming on that basis, but I can only assume, that there was no restriction placed on that by the minister.

In relation to our draft report, if we have provided information around that to Mr Thompson then Mr Thompson would be under strict confidentiality provisions not to disclose that information at this stage because it is an incomplete draft report process and we are awaiting submissions to be able to conclude that appropriately before tabling. There are two distinct issues there. One is the show cause notice and one is our draft report. I cannot comment on the show cause, but on our report. If we have provided the report or portions of the report to Mr Thompson then he would be under an obligation to keep that confidential.

Mr McDONALD: Thank you, Mr Barbour and Mr Capper, for being here today. My question is regarding the show cause notice and the trigger for the by-election. The trigger for the by-election is purely around Mr Thompson resigning; is that correct?

Mr Barbour: As I understand it, that is correct. Mr Thompson resigned. He still formally held the position of mayor. As a result of his resignation the position fell open. He did not need to respond to the show cause notice as a result of that and we have a situation where there is now a by-election to be held.

Mrs STOKER: Obviously we are all anxious to make sure that voters in the Townsville area are well informed as they go to the ballots. Are there any levers available to the minister or to the government to expedite the provision of this information ahead of election day?

Mr Barbour: Not that I can think of immediately that would be lawful.

Mrs STOKER: It is important that they are lawful.

Mr Barbour: The information which relates to this investigation is information that the CCC holds. It is important for me to emphasise that I completely understand, accept and acknowledge the incredibly significant public interest in this issue. Were it open to us to be able to do something differently we would absolutely consider whether or not that was appropriate in the circumstances. However, we are obligated, as the leading integrity agency in the state, to act with integrity and to

follow the law and so that is what we must do. Unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation that is typical in these matters. There is a lot of media discussion which is not completely accurate and it is yet another reason we need to prepare a report so that we can put the facts and the information out there, but we are caught with timelines. We must, in certain circumstances, go to the DPP. We have done that. As soon as that process was complete we have prepared a report and we have issued it within six days. We are not responsible for nor can we control the fact that there has been a by-election called. Unfortunately, the act does not give us an exemption around following the law in circumstances where there is a by-election called. What have to operate consistently, fairly and according to the act. That is all we can do.

CHAIR: Following up on the question from the Deputy Chair, given 69B provides an opportunity to Mr Thompson to seek an extension on receiving the notice, we could very well end up dealing with this matter post the by-election for the election of mayor. Would that be the case?

Mr Barbour: Certainly, Chair. As I indicated before, the very earliest date that we could envisage a report being tabled is early November—7 November. However, there are so many variables. You mentioned the possibility of an extension of time being sought and granted. That is one such variable. Any of those variables could potentially throw that timeline out and that might limit the capacity of a report to be tabled prior to the by-election date.

Ms FENTIMAN: To follow up on the deputy chair's question, of course there are options available to the parliament to provide information in these circumstances, are there not?

Mr Barbour: Absolutely. We have seen previous examples of that. That is a matter for parliament.

Mr HUNT: I just want to make it very clear that the timing of this by-election is nothing to do with the investigation, nothing to do with anything that the minister has done; the timing of the by-election is related to the resignation of Mr Thompson? Is that correct?

Mr Barbour: That is correct.

Mr McDONALD: We talked before about any opportunity to bring forward the release of the report, which you have answered articulately. Are you aware if there is any opportunity for the ECQ to extend the time of the election until after the report is released or some other timeframe?

Mr Barbour: We have looked at the provisions and I do not believe so. I think there is a statutory timeline of a certain number of weeks and the by-election must be held within that timeline.

Ms PUGH: Just while we have you here today and we are talking about issues on the public record, it is a matter of public record, and there has been media reporting this week, about the Chief Health Officer being referred to the Crime and Corruption Commission. Are you able to advise us as to the status of that matter?

Mr Barbour: I am specifically here to deal with issues relating to Investigation Murray and the former mayor of Townsville. I do not believe it is appropriate to talk about any other investigation and were I to do so it would only be in private.

Mrs STOKER: One of the things we are anxious about is ensuring we do not face a situation where, like the investigation into former minister Jackie Trad, we face a delay of several years before these matters are made public. Do you envisage a delay of that nature happening in the present case or can we expect things to be done with a much more compressed timetable?

CHAIR: Mr Barbour, I am going to rule that question out of order. As you indicated to the member for Mount Ommaney, you are here to answer questions about Troy Thompson. If there are no further questions relevant to this matter, we will move into private session. I thank Mr Barbour and Mr Capper for their attendance here today. There are no questions on notice. Members of the public can now leave the committee hearing.

The committee adjourned at 9.08 am.