



PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE

Members present:

Mr JM Krause MP—Chair
Mr DJ Brown MP
Ms JM Bush MP (virtual)
Mr MJ Crandon MP
Ms JC Pugh MP
Dr MA Robinson MP
Mr CG Whiting MP

Staff present:

Ms M Westcott—Committee Secretary
Ms A Groth—Assistant Committee Secretary

MEETING WITH THE CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMISSION

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

FRIDAY, 19 AUGUST 2022

Brisbane

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The committee met at 10.23 am.

CHAIR: The committee will now commence its public meeting with the Crime and Corruption Commission. These proceedings are being recorded by Hansard and broadcast live on the parliament's website. Members have been provided with the Crime and Corruption Commission's public report to the committee for the period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022. The proposed resolution for the committee is that the committee authorises the publication of that public report to the committee for that period. Member for Mount Ommaney, would you move that motion?

Ms PUGH: I so move.

CHAIR: Those in favour? Those against? That is carried. The committee will now commence its public discussion with the CCC.

BARBOUR, Mr Bruce, Chairperson, Crime and Corruption Commission

CHRISTENSEN, Ms Cecelia, Senior Executive Officer (Corruption), Crime and Corruption Commission

LODER, Ms Sharon, Senior Executive Officer (Crime), Crime and Corruption Commission

O'FARRELL, Ms Jen, Chief Executive Officer, Crime and Corruption Commission

CHAIR: Mr Barbour, would you like to make an opening statement to the committee? After that I am sure we will have some questions.

Mr Barbour: Thank you, Chair. If I can formally introduce and welcome to the meeting our new senior executive officer for corruption, Cecelia Christensen. We are all looking forward to working with Cecelia, and you will obviously get to know her well in the coming time.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the commission of inquiry's report, which was handed down on 9 August. This is an important report for the CCC. We welcome the report and the 32 recommendations about the structure and operations of the CCC. The recommendations addressed the following areas: seconded police and their powers; improved flexibility of police secondment arrangements; organisational culture; greater civilianisation of the corruption division; equipping corruption investigators; building corruption prevention and policy capability; enhanced operational oversight of corruption investigations; improved quality of and compliance with policies and procedures; ensuring post-prosecution reviews; advice about potential charges arising from corruption investigations; and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations. As you would be aware, the Premier advised this week that cabinet has supported in principle all of those recommendations.

Reviews of this kind provide the CCC with an opportunity to reflect on our work and look at opportunities for renewal and improvement. That was the approach that we took when engaging with the commission of inquiry over the past six months. I am confident that the recommendations, combined with our strategic renewal agenda, will ensure that we continue to evolve as an agency and that we successfully work to combat major crime and reduce corruption for all Queenslanders.

Even before the commission of inquiry was announced, in the wake of this committee's Logan inquiry we commenced to identify for ourselves opportunities for change, improvement and renewal. As we participated in the commission of inquiry process these crystallised, and it became clear that some internal structural changes would be needed to best position us to respond strategically and operationally to review recommendations and our own strategic renewal agenda. This work was reflected in the final report of the commission of inquiry.

It is recognised that the volume and complexity of strategy oriented and renewal work, including such things as reviewing and amending our policies, processes and the way we measure our performance, will increase over time. To deliver this we will enhance a range of capabilities including strategy management, strategic project management and delivery, strategic policy management and

compliance, and talent and capability development, among others. Structural changes already implemented to facilitate our renewal program include the disestablishment of what you know as the strategy insights and innovation division of the CCC. We will replace that with a new division which will be called strategy and renewal.

Work has commenced on the renewal process and we have already acted on implementing a number of the COI recommendations. These include advertising roles directly related to specific recommendations: executive director, corruption operations, responsive to recommendation 8; executive director, corruption legal, responsive to recommendation 15; director, policy, risk and compliance, responsive to recommendation 22; human capital capability director, responsive to recommendation 12; and director of the renewal program to deliver on that program.

There were a number of recommendations which clearly will require further consideration and engagement between our staff and stakeholders such as the QPS, the Director of Public Prosecutions and of course the government. The new strategy and renewal division will coordinate the development and implementation of this work in conjunction with relevant areas of the CCC. Reporting on the implementation of the commission of inquiry's recommendations will occur monthly to our executive leadership team, the commission and of course regularly and progressively to the minister and this committee. This will be a challenging time for the CCC as we work to implement the recommendations and futureproof our agency but one which carries, in my view—and I think in the view of all the leadership people within the organisation—great opportunity.

In relation to our report, which we present today to the committee, I would like to mention some of the operational highlights for the 2021-22 financial year. In the crime portfolio we have delivered the following results: finalised 19 crime investigations; concluded 30 confiscation matters; forfeited \$7.419 million to the state; provided 161 law enforcement intelligence disclosures; and conducted 151 days of hearings relating to crime investigations. In our corruption portfolio we have delivered the following results: finalised 21 corruption investigations; charged eight people with 73 criminal offences; made 19 recommendations for disciplinary action relating to 12 persons; received 3,889 complaints of suspected corruption; assessed 3,943 complaints; and made 91 prevention recommendations.

In closing, as you would be aware there are important limitations on the matters we can discuss in open session, particularly with regard to investigations which are currently in progress. The progress of any current investigation, we would submit, is appropriately dealt with in the private component of our meeting with the committee. They are my opening remarks. Thank you, Chair and members. Of course we are very happy to answer any questions that you have for us.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Barbour; I will begin. I am sure it is no surprise that we need to ask you about the Court of Appeal decision in relation to the Carne matter and the impacts that has on the CCC and its ongoing role, particularly in relation to the corruption space and prevention function of the CCC. Could you please inform the committee about the CCC's view on that decision and action taken, if any, after that Court of Appeal decision which was delivered two weeks ago, I think?

Mr Barbour: Yes. As the committee is aware, we wrote to you on 9 August confirming some of the information we provided to you last week. We indicated to you in that correspondence that we were seeking advice from counsel, and we indicated that there are major concerns about the decision and the impact that would have on our procedures. Clearly, the decision is a significant one in terms of the operations of our organisation. As you would be well aware, the CCC and its predecessors have regularly reported on the outcomes of, and lessons learned from, corruption investigations. We have a long understanding that that was an appropriate process and it was an integral part of the way in which we conducted our corruption function, especially those aspects of that function which were directed to raising standards of integrity and conduct in units of public administration. One of the means by which we did that was by transparently and publicly preparing reports of the kind which was the subject of consideration in that particular matter. As a result of receiving advice, the commission has this morning made a decision to prepare to seek an application for leave to appeal to the High Court to have the decision reconsidered by the court.

CHAIR: Mr Barbour, we had a public hearing this morning with the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner. Upon reflecting on the Court of Appeal decision you were just speaking about, the recommendations flowing out of the Coaldrake review and the Fitzgerald commission of inquiry, this one, he agreed in general terms that the narrowing of the CCC's functions in the Carne decision is incompatible with some of the recommendations flowing out of Coaldrake and the commission of inquiry, particularly relating to prevention and education in the corruption space. Can you tell me, please, if you agree with that assessment of the parliamentary commissioner? Does it narrow the functions considerably?

Mr Barbour: If the Carne decision were to stand then there would definitely be concern, I think, in terms of what we would be able to do in the future in terms of being open and transparent about our investigations and what we conclude in relation to the investigations. Let me provide an example: Operation Workshop, which was our recent report. Clearly, that investigation report was very much in the public interest. It was an important report to clarify a lot of information which was inaccurate and in discourse at the time. If you read Carne, the present decision from the Court of Appeal, then it would appear that we would not be in a position to publicly report on Operation Workshop, so clearly there are very significant ramifications. That decision is inconsistent with the way in which we and our predecessors have practised business in the corruption area for a long time. That is why it is important for us to seek a review.

In terms of specifically what the parliamentary commissioner has said, certainly there is a very important trend—and one that we agree with—in terms of more openness and transparency. The idea that we would have a situation where our powers to publicly report about important issues were in fact reduced would be inconsistent with that trend and certainly inconsistent with what we believe is important to reduce the risk of corruption in the state.

CHAIR: It is not just Operation Workshop, though; there have been a few. We had Operation Arista, which was about police recruitment, and the report about the recruitment of a principal for the inner city south secondary college. These reports, as I understand it, would not have seen the light of day except for the reporting function that you have been carrying out which is being narrowed by that decision. There are also potentially other reports in the offing. I understand your advice about there being an appeal, but isn't the quickest way to address this to seek legislative change?

Mr Barbour: Certainly legislative amendments would provide a potential outcome to the issue; however, that is not our preferred position. As you have indicated, there are a range of matters that have already been the subject of preparation, with reports prepared, and we believe that the appropriate course is to appeal the decision and have the matter determined by the High Court, even if that means that for a period of time we may be prevented from reporting in the way that we would traditionally do.

CHAIR: That could take years, couldn't it?

Mr Barbour: Hopefully it will not take years. We will get a better indication of that, obviously, as the process continues. A legislative amendment is not, in our view, the preferred option at this stage.

Mr CRANDON: Why?

CHAIR: That is a good question, Mr Crandon. Perhaps you can ask that.

Mr CRANDON: Mr Barbour, can you outline the reasons you do not think that is the preferred option?

Mr Barbour: The likelihood of a legislative amendment would be that it would only apply to matters in the future, beyond the date of the amendment. What it would not deal with is matters that are currently already prepared. It is unlikely that any legislative amendment would apply retrospectively. That would be our concern.

CHAIR: It depends on the legislation, I suppose.

Mr Barbour: Can I just also add that I think it is important to recognise that in our view the legislation does permit us to report publicly. Obviously I acknowledge the decision that the Court of Appeal has made, but we believe the existing legislation does permit us to do that and the appropriate course is to have the existing legislation reviewed and supported, if that is the case, by the decision.

CHAIR: It remains the view of the commission that public reporting on a range of matters is necessary for your function. In relation to those matters that we have spoken about—the Carne matter, the Trad matter and various other matters—you have a number of reports that you wish to still have tabled to have published in the public domain. You are not stepping away from that position in relation to those particular reports?

Mr Barbour: No.

CHAIR: Very good.

Mr WHITING: Chair, I think we have some questions down here as well.

CHAIR: Yes, I understand. I was just about to ask for government members to indicate if they wish to ask some questions.

Mr Barbour: Could I just add one more thing, just to explain the importance of the decision. I am sorry to interrupt, but, in addition to the public reports which you have identified, Chair, and which are obviously caught by this decision, there will also be a significant number of other potential areas that are caught by the decision. The committee would be aware that we were moving to put forward more detail about the outcome of our monitored matters on the website, and we were going to publish the details of those monitored matters. There is now a question about whether we can do that as a result of that decision as well. We are yet to formulate a final view on that, but it just goes to emphasise that there are a range of issues not just directed to the specific reports that you are highlighting but potentially other matters which would also be limited as a result of the decision.

Mr CRANDON: Even press releases and press statements from you?

CHAIR: Can we hold that question for the next block?

Mr CRANDON: Sure, it was just a follow-on question from what Mr Barbour was saying.

CHAIR: Hold that thought. We will go to government members and then we will come back to that.

Mr BROWN: My understanding of the judgement is that if there was a public hearing then there would be the ability to publicly report. Is that your understanding of your reading of the judgement?

Mr Barbour: Provided that the report was done at a time consistent with the investigation and, according to the judgement, was consistent with our functions. The answer is probably, but we would need to look at that on a case-by-case basis.

Mr BROWN: Is that something that has enlivened the CCC to think about how they conduct this in the meantime, during the appeal process?

Mr Barbour: That is one of the next steps. The first step that we undertook was to satisfy ourselves in terms of the legitimacy of appealing the decision. We have now done that. The next step will be to look at how we manage the issue in the interim.

Ms PUGH: My question is about the commission of inquiry report and going back to the Logan report that we did last year. One of the recommendations out of the commission of inquiry report was around establishing a more formalised relationship between your team and the team at the DPP when it comes to charging. I recognise it has only been a very short period of time since the commission of inquiry report was released, but I wonder if the organisation has had any early discussions with the DPP around how you might see that relationship. Obviously it could be an MOU; it could be a legislative framework. How do you see that playing out in your day-to-day operations?

Mr Barbour: We have not as yet entered into discussions with the DPP. It is a little bit premature at the moment. We are awaiting a decision from government about how they intend to proceed with that particular recommendation. We would imagine that it would be a legislatively based scheme. Subject to that, obviously what is contemplated is that we would have a detailed memorandum of understanding put in place with the Director of Public Prosecutions. There would be a range of issues that would be covered by that in terms of not only process but also time lines and how we would achieve that. Obviously from the Director of Public Prosecutions' side there would be how he would manage that process within the organisation. What has been contemplated and discussed publicly is that there would be a quarantined section within the DPP to handle those matters initially, but certainly we will be exploring those with the DPP. We would be actively engaged in an effort to ensure that process was as constructive and timely as we could manage.

Mr WHITING: I think one of the things we got from your opening statement was the sheer scale of work the organisation does on the criminal side of what you do. Specifically on this, and as far as you can comment in this public session, I acknowledge the intelligence-gathering operations the CCC does. Are there any noteworthy aspects of new criminal methodologies that we need to be concerned about that are coming onto our radar?

Mr Barbour: Yes, and I will ask Ms Loder to answer this specifically. One of the important elements of our work is to basically make sure we are endeavouring to stay one step ahead of criminal syndicates, particularly in relation to organised crime. It is one of the reasons we do a lot of our project work looking at money laundering, cryptocurrency and a range of areas. That is so we not only understand those very well but we build up our capability to deal with those effectively. There is no doubt that organised crime is also utilising the services of specialist advisers, lawyers, accountants and various other people to try to assist them in their pursuit of laundering money or dealing with elements of their activities in a way that makes them less detectable by law enforcement agencies. I will hand over to Ms Loder, who can tell you specifically about some of the work we are doing in that area.

Ms Loder: In addition to the cryptocurrency capability work that we are doing, which is focused on blockchain technology, we have done a lot of work in the dedicated encrypted communications device area. That is not just encrypted communications. It goes beyond simply over-the-top encrypted communication apps to technology which fundamentally alters the operating systems of mobile phones. I can probably talk a bit more about that in the private session, but those are the areas we have had a lot of focus on.

Ms PUGH: Mr Barbour, you touched on this in your opening statement but with regard to the Logan report recommendation around change management—and I know in our last session you alluded to the fact that you really wanted to be in the position permanently before you undertook that work more fulsomely. I congratulate you on your permanent appointment. I am really interested to hear what you can tell us in this public session. Maybe you could expand on what you spoke about in your opening statement in terms of the work that you are undertaking. It sounds like you have actually embarked on quite an ambitious program already.

Mr Barbour: Thank you. I will have the CEO answer in more detail than what I will do as an opening. There were two elements. One was: whilst I was in an acting role I wanted to ensure that the work that had already been commenced continued actively and appropriately. Secondly, with the engagement with the commission of inquiry it became very clear that the renewal program that the organisation was involved with would, in fact, be increased as a result of the recommendations and the focus of that particular inquiry. There has been an enormous amount of work done over the past few years and that work will also be now changed slightly in light of the recommendations. We will be continuing to roll through a whole suite of changes in terms of our organisation. I will hand over to the CEO, Ms O'Farrell, who can take you through specifically what we currently have on and where we are heading.

Ms O'Farrell: As Mr Barbour said, there are a number of inquiries proceeding at the moment that affect the commission in one way or another—in the process of the inquiry itself that we are responding to but also previous inquiries such as the Logan inquiry. We are now building improvements based on the recommendations contained in that inquiry, the Fitzgerald-Wilson inquiry, the Coaldrake review and then others that no doubt may impact the commission moving forward such as the Richards inquiry into domestic and family violence management by the QPS and also Sofronoff's inquiry in relation to DNA testing.

As Mr Barbour said, we commenced a program of reform back in 2018-19 with a new organisational structure and a focus on improvement of the policies, procedures and compliance of the commission. Some of that work will continue now with an improved focus on induction of investigators in relation to compliance with our policies and procedures. As the commission of inquiry has noted, they are extensive. I hate the word 'complex', but it is a complex environment to work in. Irrespective of where you come from, when you enter the organisation, if you have not worked in another corruption/integrity agency or law enforcement agency, there is a lot of time required to induct and be confident that you are doing the right thing, that you have compliance at the top of your mind and that you are also very much structured and focused on the purpose of the organisation. Consistent with the purpose of the organisation and that outlined by the commission of inquiry, we will be taking a much broader focus on corruption investigations and looking at the impact on the system holistically and not just a law enforcement approach. To some extent I think we do that, but we will definitely be promoting that so that the public has confidence that we are there to address criminal behaviour where it does exist, because it does exist in the system, but more importantly to very much focus on reducing that over time.

The new structure in the commission, which we have been working on ever since the Logan inquiry, is very much focused on making sure we have this renewal focus, that we are focusing on improving our systems, focusing on improving the capabilities and really understanding what the capabilities are that are required in the corruption space and not just having a single focus on law enforcement capability. While there are some recommendations which we have immediately implemented by advertising particular positions, a number of those recommendations have some large dependencies that will require a great deal of research and interrogation as well as external advice before we have a position on what that looks like going forward.

Mr CRANDON: The parliamentary commissioner suggested to us that there was a real need for specialists in the development of structures who, in his view, should be used to develop that, rather than trying to pull it together internally yourself. Have you given any thought to looking at academics?

Ms O'Farrell: Yes, structures and capabilities—I think we need to get our language set. Structures is how we organise ourselves but capability for me is the really important thing, and definitely external and expert advice is really important in that area, as is evaluation of systems and

processes. At the moment we are doing an evaluation of our complaints assessment process. We have an external consultant assisting with that to give us that external view. That consultancy has experience in that area. Absolutely, but structures and capabilities are in my mind quite different things.

Mr CRANDON: We have to come to terms with some of those terminologies you use from time to time and just clarify them. I would like to come back to the Carne matter, if I could. I have a number of things and there is a fairly short preamble. I note that the majority judgement in the Carne v CCC at paragraph 58 states—

... the Commission's corruption functions do not extend to addressing conduct which, whilst falling short of a proper standard of performance, is not corrupt conduct.

Given that view of the majority and to be clear, am I correct in thinking that this decision, if not overturned—and I know you are going down that road—on appeal or the legislation not being amended would result in the commission virtually never being able to report on the outcome of an investigation where there are no public hearings? That was something that one of my colleagues alluded to a short while ago.

Mr Barbour: I think there is certainly that risk. We have been approaching this decision primarily on the basis of reviewing it carefully and getting advice on it so that we could form a view about what would be the best process moving forward. That has been focused obviously on whether we would appeal the decision, and I have indicated to you that we propose to do that.

In terms of the actual direct ramifications and how we manage those, that is the next task that we need to address. Certainly there will be reasonable minds that will differ in terms of exactly what the limitations will and will not be. We will just have to work through that process.

Mr CRANDON: I alluded to this a short while ago. Presumably this prohibition applies to reports. Does it also apply to press releases, press statements and other outcomes?

Mr Barbour: Potentially. I have not looked at those particular issues directly. It would be something that we would look at in this next stage. Certainly there would be limitations in terms of what we could say and how we could identify it.

Mr CRANDON: Could I ask the commission to provide the committee in due course with a list of all the reports, press statements and releases on matters over the last 25 years which would appear to fall foul of the view of the majority? I am not asking for it in the short term, but could you compile something?

Ms O'Farrell: We could do our best in terms of the time frame. I do not know if we can guarantee 25 years.

Mr CRANDON: We could see how we go.

Ms O'Farrell: We certainly can.

Mr CRANDON: It is just to get an idea of the ramifications. I recall in the previous parliamentary term we were critical of press releases of two pages and that sort of thing and so we came back to more fulsome reports. I do know that prior to that we had some quite fulsome reports coming through the system. Lastly, section 69(1) clearly enables the commission to report on a public hearing. Section 176 enables the commission to hold hearings including public hearings. Under section 177 the commission may decide to hold public hearings after weighing fairness and public interest. Is one way forward until this matter is sorted to conduct more public hearings and thus more public reports?

Mr Barbour: It is certainly an option. I think that needs to be considered in the context of the fact that there is a clear preference set out in the legislation for hearings to be conducted in private and for matters not to be conducted in public. I think the issues of fairness that would go to any consideration of that kind would be in place irrespective of Carne. I think that, whilst it is certainly an option, the considerations and factors that we would take into account before making a decision about whether to conduct something in a public hearing would be the same. We would be looking at issues obviously of fairness, the appropriateness of holding a hearing in public, the particular nature of the allegations or the matters involved and those kinds of things.

Mr CRANDON: I recall Belcarra being very public hearings. It was published under section 69. I would suggest that because they were public hearings it was perhaps not captured by this. Without going back down that road of public hearings, what we are talking about effectively is putting a muzzle on the watchdog while we are waiting for a decision to be made down the track. It is sort of muzzling you in terms of what you can report publicly. Let me be clear: we still want reports in relation to all of these matters as the oversight committee. Can you take that on board?

Mr Barbour: Absolutely, we will take that on board. I certainly cannot make my position any clearer than this is a very significant decision for the commission. It is one that we obviously are looking at very closely and we are going to endeavour to address the very issues that the committee has identified so far this morning. We will keep the committee apprised of our thinking, as we always do, in relation to what we can and cannot do.

Mr CRANDON: I come to some questions that I asked quite some time ago now—time gets away—in relation to council owned corporations and some work that you were doing on that. Given indications were that there was little risk in the corruption area in that regard, I questioned why you were pursuing a particular line or particular thought about legislation. I do not want to put words into your mouth, Jen, but I think you said that you were having another look at that. I am just wondering where you are with that.

Ms O'Farrell: I think I recall saying that there was an intelligence assessment done and we had categorised them as low risk but we still supported them being regulated, which is our position.

Mr CRANDON: I thought we had another conversation after that where you were going to have another look at that—no?

Ms O'Farrell: No, our position is unchanged. We still have the view that they ought to be regulated and that they come within the jurisdiction of the CCC, to be specific.

Mr CRANDON: That was the point you were going to.

CHAIR: Mr Barbour, at estimates you spoke about journalist F and updated the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee around that matter. Do you have a further update about that particular matter that you can share with the committee here today?

Mr Barbour: Not in the public session. I am happy to deal with any questions the committee has about that matter in the closed session.

CHAIR: We are trying to give even time, but I will ask one more quick question that goes to the chair's statement about prevention recommendations that were being filtered through into units of public administration as part of your ongoing work. How does that occur? Have you reached a view whether the court decision in Carne actually impacts on that work that you are carrying out in terms of using particular investigations to form prevention recommendations?

Mr Barbour: My preliminary view is that it does not affect the prevention work. We are obviously going to be doing a considerable amount of work to build up the prevention area, consistent with the recommendations that have come out of the commission of inquiry. Our current prevention work is done in a number of different ways. It is done through audit work of systems that are in place and providing feedback to units of public administration to the preparation of publications and documents that highlight particular areas. We also look at our intelligence holdings from existing matters and identify whether or not we can pull together information from those and provide that to agencies to assist them in terms of developing their own internal systems. There is a range of different ways we do that.

I think what Jen alluded to earlier is that one of the areas of focus that we need to look at in terms of our capability within the corruption investigation space and how we utilise our teams in that area is to ensure that there is not a perception that the focus is just on a law enforcement area and focus but also a broader focus to include things like corruption prevention and how we might learn lessons from the particular matters and how we can feed that back to agencies.

Ms PUGH: Since our last public meeting you have published the report on Operation Workshop. I suppose we are talking about reports that have not resulted in a charge but more what the CCC views as their education and prevention space. Can you speak about what enlivened your decision to publish that particular report?

Mr Barbour: Operation Workshop arose as a result of complaints that were generated, as the committee knows, within the CCC following concerns that were identified by the former integrity commissioner. The investigation was underway, but during the course of the investigation there arose a considerable amount of public discussion and discourse about those matters. Clearly that enlivened the interest of the committee because the committee was interested and asked questions about it. Other members of parliament had an interest in it. The media had an interest in it. There was a lot of information being circulated which was fairly clear, at the conclusion of our investigation, was misinformed and ill-conceived.

The integrity of the integrity system within the state—the way in which it is viewed and the trust of the public in it—is critically important to its success. It was felt that reporting on that investigation was important to ensure there was complete and accurate information being provided to deal with

some of the misinformation that was out there and to also allay concerns that people in the community might genuinely hold as a result of what they were hearing and reading in relation to those particular matters that were the subject of the investigation.

Ms PUGH: In this particular case you have published a report. Are there other mechanisms that the CCC can use where you feel that a large amount of misinformation is been released into the community with regard to different integrity structures in Queensland? We have heard in the commission of inquiry report just how important public trust is, and you have spoken about it. Do you have other mechanisms, aside from publishing a report like that related to Operation Workshop, that you can use to alleviate those concerns?

Mr Barbour: One of the ways we did that prior to Carne was the publication of reports about our work. One of the purposes of those reports was in fact to explain to the community and also people in the public sector the particular issues that had been investigated, why they had been investigated, the importance of the investigation and that, although the investigation may not have led to either criminal charges or a formal finding of corrupt conduct, there were lessons learned and particular matters that could be taken from the investigation which would inform the community about our work, the importance of the work and what the particular outcomes were.

I think there is a range of other areas where we are able to contribute to the same process. We put a lot of information on our website about what we do and how we do it. Our publications are all on our website as well as made available to many people.

In our review that we undertook last year of the public sector around attitudes to corruption and what things were of import to people within the public sector, we had, as the committee knows, approximately 14,500 responses to that survey. What was clear in that was that the materials and resources that we provide are extremely helpful and seen in a very positive way by people in the public sector.

Mr BROWN: With regard to this matter and the recommendations in the Coaldrake report, would you see this sort of matter being dealt with by the clearing house?

Mr Barbour: The recommendation made by Professor Coaldrake in relation to a clearing house is obviously currently the subject of consideration by the task force which is headed up by the director-general of DJAG. We are playing a role as one of the participants in the stakeholder reference group. That group has met once or twice so far, I think, to discuss the recommendations. As Professor Coaldrake identified himself in his report, whilst there is some attraction to the notion of a clearing house and what it might achieve given the problems that he identified, to actually put one in place and to have it operate successfully would be extremely challenging. Those challenges are the very things that the task force and stakeholder reference group will be focusing on and looking at.

To the extent that problems of the kind we are talking about would be solved by a clearing house, I do not think they would contribute to a resolution in that respect. The clearing house model is much more focused on an entry point to integrity agencies and not so much on the actual subject matter that is investigated or the public commentary that is out there in terms of the matters the public identifies as significant.

Mr WHITING: Looking at the statistics in the report, it has been noted that there has been a 27 per cent increase in complaints about the QPS. Are there any thoughts on why we are seeing complaints about the police increase to that extent?

Mr Barbour: Yes. You will note that that particular table actually has a note attached to that increase. What is identified there is an explanation that we believe, from our analysis of the complaints and what is coming in, answers that particular query. We believe that that increase is largely attributed to positive action that has been taken by the QPS to review incidents of alleged failure of duty, police misconduct on the part of investigating officers, particularly responding to domestic violence incidents, as well as a failure of police staff to comply with the commissioner's directions which related to COVID related matters. The increase seems to be directly related to an increase in matters coming through to us and being reported to us in those particular areas. Whether that increase continues or whether that is a trend of any sort, I cannot really say. Obviously, we monitor the numbers and we look to what is leading to the increase.

Mr WHITING: Obviously you need to liaise with the police about these particular complaints. How have you found the cooperation in terms of explaining or examining the increase in complaints?

Mr Barbour: Most of the complaints we receive about police are effectively returned to police for investigation, usually by the Ethical Standards Command or other. For matters that raise particularly serious issues—either corrupt conduct or serious police misconduct—there is an opportunity for us to monitor those matters and/or work with them to investigate matters.

Certainly in my time as chair I have not had anything other than appropriate cooperation from police in relation to matters. The committee would be aware of particularly significant joint investigation operations that are the subject of reporting in our reports. That work was done extremely well. It involved a significant number of police who were the subject of investigation and a lot of criminal charges were laid as a result of that. That is demonstrative of a good working relationship. Can I say do we always agree on everything all the time? No. But that is not an unhealthy position to be in either.

Ms PUGH: I noticed in the quarterly report you focus on exploitation of vulnerable people. I am interested in finding out a little more about its relationship to corruption. I think we are talking about human trafficking, particularly of women and children. I am interested in understanding a little more about that relationship because it is not something I am particularly aware of or do not have a lot of insight into. I am interested in any public insight that you might be able to provide about your work in that space and that relationship between vulnerable people who are at risk of being either trafficked or otherwise exploited and the work of the Crime and Corruption Commission?

Mr Barbour: The area of crimes against children and vulnerable people is one of our focus areas in our crime division and our crime work. It is quite specific and we work with the QPS very closely in relation to those particular matters. I might hand over to Ms Loder to provide you with a more detailed summary of some of the issues that have come up and the kinds of matters we are looking at.

Ms Loder: I should first clarify that it is quite separate to our corruption work. It is not suggested that anybody in the public sector is involved in trafficking children. It is an area of focus for our crime work. We have a general referral from our Crime Reference Committee, which issues us with authorities for our criminal jurisdiction. The majority of matters that we deal with in this space are assisting the QPS to solve investigations where there have been child deaths or serious injuries to children—almost exclusively. Occasionally we will get a vulnerable person who is not a child who fits that definition. Have I answered the question?

Ms PUGH: Yes, I think so.

CHAIR: Mr Barbour, in relation to the CCC's legal costs for the Carne matter and also the matter involving Ms Trad, would you be able to update the committee about the costs expended?

Mr Barbour: The costs thus far I think have not changed since we have provided advice to the committee.

CHAIR: In which matter?

Mr Barbour: In both, other than we have just obtained advice in relation to whether or not to appeal in the Carne matter so there will be some additional costs that come in in relation to that. In terms of the Carne matters to date for the Supreme Court and also the Court of Appeal, the total figure is \$109,691.26. In relation to the Trad matter, as communicated to you in our correspondence previously, that is \$74,137.01.

CHAIR: Just out of interest, do you know who is paying for Mr Carne's legal costs?

Mr Barbour: No. I cannot help you with that.

CHAIR: No worries. When the Attorney-General was asked recently by the media about whether there should be an apology offered to former Logan City councillors, she said that was a matter for the CCC. Are you able to offer such an apology on behalf of the CCC?

Mr Barbour: As the committee is aware, there are certain matters in train which would prevent me from dealing specifically with that. To the extent that I am able to speak publicly at this stage about those matters, I am extremely limited. I am more than happy in the closed session to provide a little more detail in response to you.

CHAIR: Okay. In estimates there was a question answered by you in relation to investigations regarding the QBCC. I have the *Hansard* in front of me. You said—

One was notified by another public sector agency for work complaints made directly to the CCC by members of the public, and two were self-generated by the CCC.

There were 30 matters initially related to the QBCC. Two were self-generated and there were a couple of investigations on foot. Does one of those investigations on foot relate to a member of the board of the QBCC?

Mr Barbour: As I mentioned in my opening statement, it is inappropriate to discuss specific operational matters and current matters that we have underway. If there is a question along those lines, I am more than happy to deal with it in the closed session.

CHAIR: Okay. I take you back to the Carne matter. Have you had an opportunity to meet with the Attorney-General at all about this matter to consider the way forward?

Mr Barbour: No, I have not met with the Attorney-General. Quite frankly, I think at this stage determining how we should proceed is a matter vested in the CCC.

CHAIR: Finally, I have a question on the whole matter about public reporting and your powers—I should say the ‘commission’s powers’, although I know you are invested with many powers as well as chairperson, Mr Barbour. As the member for Coomera alluded to, this committee has had a bit of a journey with the CCC over the last three, four or five years in terms of how they report particularly corruption outcomes. That led to, as I understand it, a situation where reports were provided to the committee, and it is self-evident that those reports have been published when they are tabled by the Speaker. I am not revealing anything confidential in saying that because they are on the public record. It is self-evident that the committee has been a part of that process. Taking into account the ramifications of the Carne matter, which makes this process more problematic when it comes to section 69, will the commission consider any other means of enabling your public reporting to continue, as the committee has been a part of that process in the past? Have you considered whether there are ways that might continue into the future?

Mr Barbour: As I mentioned to Mr Crandon, the next stage of our consideration of these particular issues will be along the lines of considering all of these matters and determining what the best strategy is moving forward. There are a whole range of elements that are enlivened, if you like, by the decision in Carne. What we need to do as an organisation is look at those, look at our work practices, look at what we have understood to be appropriate practice and consider whether or not the decision relates to those and develop a strategy for dealing with them. That will be the next stage of our handling of this matter.

CHAIR: Because a High Court appeal can take quite a while. If you are not able to publicly report under section 69 during that time, it is very problematic.

Mr Barbour: Yes.

CHAIR: I would urge you to please look at that after today when you have lodged the appeal.

Mr Barbour: I cannot stress more than I have already that this is significant and we are going to be looking at it.

CHAIR: Okay.

Ms PUGH: How much longer do we have in the public session?

CHAIR: As long as we like.

Ms PUGH: I have a lot of questions for the private session too. My question goes back to the change management work that you are doing. I note in the commission of inquiry report that roughly one in five CCC team members are seconded police officers. In this process, do you see that number changing at all with the work you are doing around organisational capability and change? Do you think that number will remain essentially the same? I should stress that the report also talks about the importance of having those seconded police officers in there and the good work that they do.

Mr Barbour: First of all, it is important to recognise that the commission of inquiry’s focus was on our corruption division. In reviewing the particular matters under its terms of reference, it has obviously made recommendations that focus on the corruption division. Importantly, it also recognised and reinforced the need for and the importance of having seconded police officers working within the organisation in certain areas where those positions are in fact essential for the effective operation of the commission.

In terms of the corruption division, it has recommended a move to a greater civilianisation of positions, and that is what we will be working towards. It is suggested we do that over a five-year time line. As Ms O’Farrell said earlier, that is not just about looking at structure; importantly, it is looking at capability. One of the pieces of work that we are going to need to do is to look at the particular capabilities, the skills, the level of experience and the qualities that people—whether they are police officers or civilians—bring to a multidisciplinary team to allow us to best execute our responsibilities. That is what we will be doing. Ms O’Farrell, is there anything you would like to add?

Ms O’Farrell: No, just to endorse it—that we do not have a current view. We are very much committed to looking at what is that capability requirement. As an example, we have been doing this for quite a while, particularly in our crime area. We have looked at the capabilities that we require in crime, because they are changing, and where we find those within the QPS.

The position with the commission structure with the QPS secondments is dealt with in the report as well, about giving the Crime and Corruption Commission greater flexibility around the mix and the rank of seconded police officers. We were locked in to particular rank structures within the seconded positions. We do not necessarily see the capabilities we require in particular ranks within the QPS. We have seen them in lower ranks, so we have been working with the QPS to say that instead of having a sergeant position we want a senior constable position. That is just an assessment of capability that we are seeing in younger police. That is not to say that other police do not have it, but we are particular about digital literacy, forensic capability, understanding particular blockchain technology and the like. We are trying to be quite specific about the capability rather than just the rank of the officer.

Ms PUGH: Thank you.

Mr CRANDON: You mentioned IT, which triggered a thought in my mind. How are we going on the IT front?

Ms O'Farrell: We are doing lots of work. It is a very difficult thing. We have some money budgeted this financial year to do some extra work to look at what is out there in the marketplace. Interestingly, though, we have just recently looked at another law enforcement agency which is about to go live in a controlled environment on a new system that they custom built. That looks very promising from our perspective in terms of a good fit for us. We will not do anything substantial in relation to that this current financial year, primarily because we are focused on doing other things and they are only going live in October in a controlled way. We will be looking at that more closely probably early next year with a view to potentially looking to do a further dive with that particular system. It is custom built, as I said, but it is more closely aligned, on our initial assessment, to the requirements that we have.

CHAIR: Mr Barbour, I thank you and your team. I thank everyone in the public gallery and those watching at home. We will adjourn this meeting and go into a private session with the CCC.

The committee adjourned at 11.27 am.