



PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE

Members present:

Mr JM Krause MP—Chair
Mr JA Sullivan MP
Mr DJ Brown MP
Mr MJ Crandon MP
Mr JR Martin MP
Ms JC Pugh MP
Dr MA Robinson MP

Staff present:

Ms E Hastie—Committee Secretary
Ms H Radunz—Assistant Committee Secretary
Mr F Poropat—Committee Support Officer

MEETING WITH THE PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMISSIONER

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Friday, 24 November 2023

Brisbane

FRIDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2023

The committee met at 9.00 am.

CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. I am Jon Krause, the member for Scenic Rim and chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee. Joining me today are: Mr Jimmy Sullivan, the deputy chair and member for Stafford; Mr Don Brown, the member for Capalaba; Mr James Martin, the member for Stretton, who is substituting today for Ms Jonty Bush, the member for Cooper; Mr Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera; Ms Jess Pugh, the member for Mount Ommaney; and Dr Mark Robinson, the member for Oodgeroo.

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 proceedings at my discretion or by order of the committee. The proceedings are being recorded by Hansard and broadcast live on the parliament's website. 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 should anyone wish to view them. Those present today should note it is possible you may be filmed or photographed by media during proceedings and images may appear on the parliament's website or social media pages. Before we proceed I ask everyone, including members, to please turn mobile phones off or switch them to silent mode.

The committee is beginning its meeting in public to deal briefly with some committee matters before commencing its public meeting with the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner. The committee will then close the public part of the meeting and continue its meeting with the parliamentary commissioner in private session. Following that, the committee will meet in public from approximately 11 am with the Crime and Corruption Commission before closing the public part of that meeting to continue the remainder of those proceedings with the CCC in private session.

Members have been provided with a copy of the agenda for today's meeting. I move that the agenda for Friday, 24 November 2023 which has been circulated be adopted. Those in favour? Those against? That is carried.

Are there any apologies? I will note an apology from the member for Cooper and a substitution by the member for Stretton. Are there any declarations of interest relevant to this public session?

Mr SULLIVAN: Not from me, Chair.

CHAIR: There being none, we will move on to the parliamentary commissioner's public report, which the committee has been provided with, for the period 7 September 2023 to 10 November 2023. I will ask the member for Coomera to move that the committee authorise the publication of the parliamentary commissioner's public report to the committee for that period.

Mr CRANDON: I am happy to do that, Chair.

CHAIR: Is there any discussion? All those in favour? Those against? That is carried. Members have been provided with a copy of a briefing paper in relation to that report. We will now commence our public discussion with the parliamentary commissioner.

KUNDE, Mr Mitchell, Principal Legal Officer, Office of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner

WOODFORD, Mr Michael, Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner

Mr Woodford: It has been two months since I last met with the committee. You have both public and private reports dated today, 24 November. Over the period, a large amount of the work undertaken by the office has been auditing functions. We have been down to both the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Corruption Commission undertaking auditing and reviews, and reports have been generated in relation to that.

In other work during the two months: there have been ongoing discussions with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General about the removal of the Connolly-Ryan records. That is progressing well and we have arrived at a second set of amendments, so I think they will come through in the not-too-distant future. Various notifications have come in under section 329 of the act. They have all been considered and finalised for my part.

Only last week Mr Kunde and I went to Sydney, as we do annually, to meet with our counterparts from the other states and territories. That was a fruitful meeting, as it seems to always be, so we can exchange ideas about the functions that we perform in a closed, private setting. I benefited from that, as did Mr Kunde.

There is some ongoing investigation work the committee referred down. One particular matter the committee will receive a report on maybe late next week is almost finalised. Otherwise, there are a number of other matters ongoing.

That is a summary, Mr Krause, of the work that has been ongoing in the office over the last couple of months.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Woodford.

Mr SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr Woodford and Mr Kunde. You mentioned auditing work. I know that in the past you have said there can be some difficulties with the TIA Act and different interpretations across different jurisdictions. In terms of the practical responsibilities of your office, are you confident that you have received the cooperation and access from the CCC that you require to tick that oversight role?

Mr Woodford: Yes, I can confirm that—as has been the case since I have been in this role—I have had good, full and frank open access and assistance when I have called for it, both down at the CCC and from the QPS.

Mr SULLIVAN: I noted in your report it was both, yes.

Mr Woodford: On that, just as an example you may have seen in its public record matters, or at least through the media, the Police Commissioner announced in a public forum that a taskforce was set up to deal with some information that came to the QPS from the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission. That is something that has happened since I saw you last, I think. It was something that grabbed my attention. When we were down at the QPS, in advance of going down there I sought a briefing on what was going on. Of course I knew nothing about what was going on. Nothing had been reported, and the extent of what I knew was what was coming through the media. We do not want to jump the gun on things, but I received a briefing from the QPS in relation to that, and helpfully the QPS arranged for a private and confidential briefing to me from the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission. That took place several days after I was down at the QPS. I had a good, frank exchange with a representative from that organisation, and I am satisfied that everything that needs to be done is being done. I have called for a report to come in to me when both of those organisations have concluded their work in relation to that issue. I have complete confidence that, as the commissioner said in her media release, a taskforce is being set up down there to look through the issue. I certainly have no problem at all with stepping back and not inquiring further into that because it is being handled appropriately by both organisations. To answer your question, they have been open. When I wanted more, they have certainly been helpful.

Mr SULLIVAN: This may be more a question to Mr Kunde. In relation to the refurbishment of parliament—I am not asking about details of the security situation with your office; you are sort of offline from other areas—has your work been impeded, or have you been able to maintain the security that you need for the documents and material you deal with on a daily basis?

Mr Kunde: We have had no issues in that respect. There are no concerns. Some of the reports have probably taken some time, but that is in prioritising other inspections and everything. There are no concerns in at that regard, really.

Mr SULLIVAN: I have more questions that are probably more appropriate for the private session. Thank you for your progressive work program, I think it is called. It is clear that you are busy and productive. Is there anything you want to add to that, or do you think you have probably covered that in your summary?

Mr Woodford: I think so. It has only been two months since I last saw you.

Mr SULLIVAN: But you have packed a lot in there.

Mr Woodford: I was reflecting on it yesterday and discussing it with Mr Kunde. There are parts which I will discuss in the private meeting that I completely forgot because we have had quite a bit going on.

Mr SULLIVAN: As I said, we will go into that in more detail in the private session. On the public record, thanks for the extraordinary amount of work you have done.

Ms PUGH: If you want to, you can certainly furnish additional material in the private session. Regarding our earlier conversations around witness welfare and some of the discussions that have been had, are there any updates or information you want to furnish in that particular area?

Mr Woodford: There are. I raised witness welfare after I was down in Sydney last time. I took it to a point where I discussed things in the open public session here, as we are again now, and of course staff from the CCC would be well aware of what I raised in relation to the issue at that time. Things are raised in that manner so people can understand it is a serious issue, and it is an issue that I am interested in and I know the committee is very interested in. It has been a particularly busy year for my office, and Mr Kunde and I have had discussions about it. As we come through completing the remaining investigations that are there—I expect early into next year—then I am going to revisit the issue of witness welfare. The committee can expect that I will be corresponding with it to perhaps ask the committee to check in with the CCC about where things are up to—the policies and procedures.

Interestingly, when I was in Sydney it was a matter that was again raised within the confines of the group discussion—not by me but by friends from Victoria. Some discussions were had about more work they are doing down there on that issue. That is what I propose to be doing moving forward. It is an issue that is on my radar. Having given it a year since it was last raised, I would like to see the issue progressed in a more formal way into the new year.

CHAIR: In relation to that last topic, witness welfare, we have appreciated your advice on that in the past and look forward to it in the future. Perhaps we can put that to the CCC as well. Just on a different note, you have previously noted there have been difficulties for oversight agencies performing their functions in circumstances where they are unable to receive information related to TI and stored communications data obtained by integrity bodies. Are you able to elaborate on those difficulties in this public meeting and whether the discussions that you had recently raised that issue across the nation?

Mr Woodford: It was a hot topic of discussion across the nation. As you would be aware, Mr Krause, the Commonwealth legislation is currently being amended. How things work is that the Commonwealth government agency engages with different states in terms of the amendments for each state. As I understand things, draft legislation is progressing, albeit it is progressing at different rates for different states. You might recall that for Queensland there is some draft legislation that has come down from the Commonwealth in relation to the amendments, then there has been discussion around that, and there has been input from both me and the CCC. The Attorney-General is involved in dealing with the Commonwealth in that.

CHAIR: Mr Woodford, I am not certain of how much of that is in the public domain, so I would just ask you to proceed with caution.

Mr Woodford: Yes, I will. The short answer is that amendments are being worked on by both Commonwealth and state agencies. It is something that is of interest to all of the states and territories—the amendments—and we are hoping to progress them. I might talk more about that later.

CHAIR: Are there any other significant issues you wish to raise, based on the work you have done in the last couple of months?

Mr Woodford: No, there is nothing based on the work that I have done, no.

CHAIR: In relation to 329 assessments and notifications, are there any issues or patterns you see arising that you wish to comment on at this point in time?

Mr Woodford: No, nothing beyond what I raised last time, Mr Krause. There is nothing new.

CHAIR: It seems we are all out of questions today. Dr Robinson, do you have any?

Dr ROBINSON: You just got my last one.

Ms PUGH: I will certainly put this to the CCC as well, but just around social media and digital footprints there has been a bit of work that has happened in that space over the last year. I just wondered if you had any thoughts that you wanted to share with the committee around the digital footprint work that is being done. I am also happy for you to furnish anything additional in the private session, of course.

Mr Woodford: I am sorry, I missed the last part of that.

Ms PUGH: I just said if you wanted to cover that in the private session, I am more than happy for that to be the case. We certainly have discussed some of it in public before, but of course there might be additional things you wanted to furnish in the private session.

Mr Woodford: No, that is not something I have engaged with since we last discussed it. Two or three quarters ago we discussed it in relation to a particular matter. It is not something that I have had the opportunity to engage with further.

CHAIR: In answer to the first question from the deputy chair you said that you were doing some work in relation to the referral of information between the Commonwealth and other agencies. Do you need any referral from us to do that work, or are you equipped within your powers to do that?

Mr Woodford: No, I do not need anything from you at this stage. If I do, we will correspond.

CHAIR: This brings us to the end of our public hearing with the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner. We will now move into private session.

The committee adjourned at 9.18 am.