



# **PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE**

## **Members present:**

Hon. ML Furner MP—Chair  
Hon. GJ Butcher 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 CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMISSION**

### **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

**Tuesday, 13 May 2025**

**Brisbane**

## TUESDAY, 13 MAY 2025

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**The committee met at 10.30 am.**

**CHAIR:** Good morning. The committee will now commence its public meeting with the Crime and Corruption Commission. The proceedings are being recorded by Hansard and broadcast live on the parliament's website. I take this opportunity to remind those participating to turn their microphone on before speaking and off once they have finished to ensure they can be heard clearly and proceedings are accurately captured for broadcast and transcription purposes. I also remind those present to ensure that any mobile phones are turned off or switched to silent mode.

Members, are there any declarations of interest relevant to this public session? There are none. Members are to note that they have been provided with a secretariat briefing, a copy of the CCC's public report for the period from 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025, and the transcript of the last public meeting with the CCC on 12 February 2025. The proposed resolution is that the committee authorises the publication of the Crime and Corruption Commission's public report to the committee for the period 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025. I move that. All those in favour? Those against? That is carried.

**BARBOUR, Mr Bruce, Chairperson, Crime and Corruption Commission**

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

**DARCH, Ms Helen, OAM, Ordinary Commissioner, 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:** The committee will now commence its public discussion with the Crime and Corruption Commission. I welcome everyone. Thank you for joining us today. Mr Barbour, would you like to make a brief opening statement?

**Mr Barbour:** We are pleased to present the Crime and Corruption Commission's report for the period 1 January to 31 March 2025. The public report sets out in detail our performance and activities for the reporting period, but I would like to highlight some of the work that we undertook during this time.

Operationally, during the three-month reporting period, the crime division finalised one QPS referred investigation and progressed three in relation to drug trafficking, weapons trafficking and money laundering. It also advanced two other major crime investigations: one into production and trafficking of dangerous drugs, and one into alleged money laundering involving a professional facilitator. To finalise or progress other QPS referred investigations, the crime division examined witnesses at hearings in relation to homicide offences. As at the end of the reporting period, the proceeds of crime team had obtained restraining orders to the value of \$5.248 million and a total of \$6.28 million was returned to the state as forfeited property.

Turning now to the work of the corruption division, for the period 1 January to 31 March the corruption division received 1,197 complaints which were identified as falling within our jurisdiction. Of these, we triaged 113 as meeting the criteria of serious, systemic and/or strategic importance. During the period, a total of 1,436 matters were assessed. Of these, four were retained for CCC investigation, 54 matters were referred to the relevant UPA subject to outcome advice, 894 matters were referred to the relevant UPA with no further advice required, and 484 were assessed as requiring no further action.

As at 31 March, the corruption division had finalised 10 investigations. Two investigations resulted in briefs of evidence relating to fraud being referred to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice as to the suitability of criminal prosecution. One investigation was finalised in relation to misuse of authority and misuse of information. Additional issues identified during the course

of that investigation were referred to the UPA for investigation subject to CCC monitoring. Seven matters were finalised in relation to misuse of office or authority and misuse of information. The investigations in those matters did not substantiate any allegations of corrupt conduct. As at 31 March, the CCC was progressing with 33 corruption investigations.

On 28 March, we launched our corruption perceptions survey. The survey closed last Friday, on 9 May. Over those six weeks, staff of Public Service departments, hospital and health services, and local governments across Queensland were asked for their views on corruption risks, attitudes towards reporting corruption and integrity. There were 10,059 completed surveys. This information will now be analysed, and key findings from the survey responses will be made available in due course on our website.

Our work continues on the implementation of recommendations from the commission of inquiry. During the reporting period, the CCC has implemented 23 recommendations in full as at 31 March and has made significant progress on seven others. We expect to have finalised all recommendations from the commission of inquiry by 30 June next year.

I would also like to refer in a little detail to the Crime and Corruption (Restoring Reporting Powers) Amendment Bill 2025 which passed in parliament on 30 April. The bill comes about after a sustained period of advocacy on behalf of the CCC about the importance of reporting powers in the context of corruption matters in our work. The bill is significant. Its primary objective is to empower the CCC to publicly report and make public statements about corruption matters. In effect, it is restoring those powers as broadly understood to exist prior to the Court of Appeal and High Court's decision in the matter of Carne.

The bill recognises the importance of the public interest in, and expectations about, transparent and accountable government whilst at the same time responsibly protecting the private rights and interests of individuals. The bill introduces new safeguards and an expanded procedural fairness process as part of the reporting regime, and these will sit alongside the CCC's obligations under the Human Rights Act to provide protections for individuals and to guide the CCC in making reporting decisions. Importantly, the bill also validates past reports and statements by the CCC and its predecessor bodies, putting beyond doubt that those previous reports and statements are taken to have always been lawfully and validly made. This will allow the CCC to be able to restore public access to reports about corruption investigations and corruption risks on our website.

The bill also makes minor amendments to improve efficiencies of the CCC, including in relation to the electronic service of notices and engagement of agents under section 256. The bill is yet to receive assent. While the date of commencement of the bill's provisions is yet to be confirmed, we understand the provisions relating to the CCC—other than the late amendment to the tenure provision in section 231—will commence on assent. We have commenced preliminary implementation work, including preparing fact sheets to advise commissioned officers about the amendments and reviewing impacted policies and procedures.

Those are my opening remarks. I extend apologies to the committee from three commissioners who are unable to attend today, but we are delighted to have at least one of our commissioners here, Ms Darch. We are happy to answer any questions which you have for any of us.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. Could you elaborate on the 10,059 responses to the survey in terms of a breakdown of which agencies they came from?

**Mr Barbour:** I have a table which provides some of that information. The breakdown is 116 completed surveys from the Queensland Police Service, 973 from local government and 5,957 from the public sector. That employee subtotal comes to 7,046. There were 3,008 from the community and five from a community generic link, offering 3,013 in total from the community. It is also noted that there were some partially completed surveys. We need to look at the data in relation to those to see how useful that would be and whether or not we incorporate that in our analysis work. If we look at the partial completions, the total figure is 16,218.

**CHAIR:** Well done on that volume of responses back on that survey.

**Mrs STOKER:** Before I ask my actual question, can I ask whether within the public sector responses you got to the survey there were any particular public sector departments that had a higher or more notable response rate?

**Mr Barbour:** I do not have that breakdown at the moment but we will have that as part of the analysis. That will obviously provide us with some insight into certain issues.

**Mrs STOKER:** When can we expect that?

**Mr Barbour:** Hopefully, within the next month to two months we will have analysed all the data. We are working with EY and we will put a set of materials on the website.

**Mrs STOKER:** Thank you. My question is in relation to the corruption monitoring program. I saw the report had a 43 per cent decrease in the proportion of referred corruption matters that were being monitored over the recent reporting period. Can you tell me something about the reasons for that? Is that the result of the corruption monitoring model that was brought in in mid-2023, or is it happening for some other reason?

**Mr Barbour:** I do not think there is any particular reason for that change. The monitoring process is really our second tier, if you like, in terms of significant matters. In other words, we would only put into our monitoring program matters which are considered to be matters that are significant enough to warrant us making sure that we are supervising the investigation that is being undertaken by the UPA, we are working closely with them, and, if we are not satisfied with that investigation or something comes out during the course of it, we can actually take it over ourselves. The number of matters that go into monitoring are going to fluctuate depending on what comes in through the front door, if I can put it that way. There will be natural peaks and troughs. There is no particular trend or reason for it. At some stages, there will be higher numbers. I do not think the changes to our monitoring program have really impacted those numbers significantly, and that change has been in place for quite some time now.

**Mr BUTCHER:** I think I asked this question in relation to complaints at our last hearing. I note there has been a 10 per cent increase in complaints. A lot of those complaints, from what we have heard and understand, are around the handling of the process and getting back to people on where their complaints are. At the last meeting you highlighted some of the actions the CCC was taking to streamline the complaints-handling process. Can you give us an update on the tracking in terms of assessing and responding to complaints within the set timeframes? I note the standard is a target of 30 days and the review said it was around 57 days. Last time we talked about staff, sickness and the like. Can you run through whether we have the capacity now to get these down to 30 days, and have you implemented any other process to try to get these complaints seen to and sorted out?

**Mr Barbour:** I will get Mr Capper to answer that question in detail. However, if I can just say by way of introduction that we are still bedding down the changes to the system. I am pleased to note that, for example, the matters monitoring, which is that 57 days, has come down from 73 at the last report. There will be fluctuations. We are working to deal with matters as quickly as we possibly can, and that 30-day timeline is certainly aspirational and something that we are working towards. If you have large volumes of increased matters coming through the door, the challenge is always going to be trying to have the capacity and capability to deal with those in the most efficient way possible, and that is certainly what we are aiming our work towards.

**Mr BUTCHER:** Can I just comment. Is that 30 days aspirational, or should we adjust it so that people's expectations are not that it is going to be delivered in 30 days and then it is not delivered until 57 days? Should we re-evaluate that and find a better playing ground on the amount that is coming through now and the number of people working on these cases? Is that in your mindset of what we should be looking at doing, rather than having a written figure that says you will respond within 30 days? If I am a person who is sitting there thinking, 'They said 30 days and it's now 57'—and if that is happening in a lot of these cases—should we re-evaluate that so that people's expectations are a bit lower?

**Mr Barbour:** That figure is only in relation to monitored matters. Those are matters where we are dealing directly with the UPA, and that timeline is for response back after a completed matter to the agency. It is not a figure which relates to people coming in the door who are actually complainants so it has to be put in that context. Certainly, we will always keep under review timelines and performance indicators to see whether they need to be adjusted. At this stage, I think it would be premature to look at actually adjusting that timeline. Let me hand over to Mr Capper to provide you with a bit more detail.

**Mr Capper:** In relation to the statistics you have quoted, obviously there has been the 10 per cent increase this year, but we also need to take into account that is also in addition to the 24 per cent increase from last year as well. The numbers have significantly risen over the past two years and are being dealt with. You will also see there is an eight per cent increase in the responsiveness as well so it is actually progressively catching up to the amount of work that is there. We have put in place significant changes to be able to streamline the assessment processes and bring those down as quickly as we can. We are working very strongly towards that. It is something that is under constant evaluation and something we are working towards.

**Mr BUTCHER:** We have heard some stories around cases that go on for a fair bit of time, of people feeling as if they have not been listened to and the CCC has not responded to them. Is there a process in place where whoever has the complaint in gets that feedback a bit more regularly rather than long periods of time where they just do not hear anything for months in some cases? Is there a single point of contact or a case manager? How does that look? Just say I have made a complaint and they have said that things are happening and I have not heard anything for two months, just silence, what is the process around that and what does that look like?

**Mr Capper:** In relation to those matters the commission endeavours to keep in contact with members who have made complaints very regularly. Obviously it is dependent upon the circumstances of the individual matter as to how much information we have at a particular point in time and how quickly the matter can move. Often we are trying to gather more information to be able to progress it to the next phase, whether or not it is an investigation by us or our other agencies. We are also looking at our internal processes presently to look at making sure that we have processes to provide regular feedback. There are a couple of specific instances that you would be aware of where members have expected a greater sense of engagement with the commission, but it is also that balance between the role of the commission providing support and assistance to somebody versus the UPA, particularly when the matters are referred back to them.

That balance needs to be undertaken about what we can provide around the status of our investigation and where we are at whilst also maintaining the integrity of an investigation, but also the welfare and the needs of the complainant within their workplace. We are trying to find that balance in relation to those matters and working with the agencies to ensure that they are providing greater feedback. We have increased monitoring in terms of increasing feedback from matters that are subject to monitoring to get additional information. We have provided UPAs with feedback around wanting to ensure that they are in regular contact with the complainants that have been referred to them. In other cases the difficulty, of course, is persons, particularly—for example, public interest disclosures do not necessarily want their information disclosed to the agency and that creates its own issues, but we are working in relation to that.

**Mr STEVENS:** My question is to Mr Barbour. There have been three CCC investigations into Gold Coast council that I have been reasonably closely related to. The last one actually found no corruption whatsoever and yet the report that was tabled did enormous reputational damage to staff members. The parliamentary commissioner has advised us that under the new legislation there is no necessity for every report to be tabled; it is a matter of if there is a report written by the chairperson then it does have to be tabled. At what level is there a degree of compunction, if you like, to table a report when there has been a publicly announced investigation into somewhere like the Gold Coast city council? At what level do you feel it is appropriate in terms of the new legislation having fairness in its delivery to put a report to the parliament that may impinge on people's reputations?

**Mr Barbour:** Thank you for the question. It raises a number of very significant issues and ones that we are, in fact, about to embark on considering in some detail. Now that we have the legislative amendments and they are about to come in, one of the first things that we need to do now that we know exactly what those amendments look like and what the responsibilities are going to be, what the new safeguards are, is to actually work within the organisation to set out some parameters about what we think is appropriate to take into account in determining whether or not we make a report public. Obviously, a report is not just going to deal potentially with a corruption investigation; it might also be a prevention report, it might look at themes, there might be a range of things that we need to look at. One of the things that we need to do now that we know and we have certainty about the legislation is what approach we are going to adopt and what factors we are going to take into account.

Typically it would be unusual to table a report publicly where there was no outcome which suggested that a matter was significant or certain views had been formed during the course of the investigation or a report made under section 49, but as you pointed out in your question, there will be matters where there is significant public interest that has been generated by media discussion or other people talking about matters, and it may well be in the interests of everybody to report on those to be able to bring some clarity to the understanding of people about what we have actually done and why we have done it. Apart from speaking in generalities, I cannot really give you anything in more detail than that, but we are certainly mindful of ensuring that we think very carefully about this and we take into account a range of considerations prior to reporting publicly.

**Mr STEVENS:** You are considering the matter now. Would you be able to come back to the committee with some level that you would see was appropriate for tabling a report in part of your discussions?

**Mr Barbour:** Absolutely. I have no concerns with doing that. It might be something that we do in private session or public depending on the detail of it, but certainly I would be happy to indicate to the committee in due course the sorts of issues that we have identified as being factors in our deliberations.

**Ms PUGH:** Following on from the question from the member for Mermaid Beach, the legislation gives you both the ability to report in the form of a tabled report and the ability to make public statements. From an internal CCC process point of view, I am curious to understand at what point in an investigation the CCC would determine that a matter would be an appropriate matter to write a report about and is it generally the case that once a report has been commenced that it is always completed or are there cases where a report may be in the initial stages of drafting or at some point along the way and that report is not completed for whatever reason or is it the case that once commenced reports are always completed, no matter what the outcome of that report?

**Mr Barbour:** Thank you for the question. Much as I indicated in my earlier answer, we are obviously going to be putting some meat on those issues as we discuss them. I think in the specifics of your question, there is no compulsion to complete a report that you might have started. However, I think when we look at these issues and we reflect on process, it is going to be important at an early stage to try to identify whether it is the kind of matter that would be a suitable matter for a public report, that you keep that in mind during the course of the investigation, but until you get into the investigation and conclude the investigation it is very difficult to make a final decision about something like that. What might seem to be a suitable matter because it looks like it is quite significant and it is going to be in the public interest might turn out not to be. Similarly, matters that look on their face to be quite straightforward and not significant might end up, after investigation, turning into being quite significant.

The other thing is we cannot control often the narrative that happens outside the organisation. It is always amazing to us the speculation and commentary that happens often in the media and in broader areas of the community about what we are working on and what we are doing. I find it personally interesting to be able to pick up a newspaper to find out what I am doing when, in fact, I am not actually doing that. It is one of those factors that I think we need to take into account as well. If there is a lot of speculation, and particularly if that speculation is wrong, it may well be necessary to correct that narrative by way of public reporting.

**CHAIR:** That is common sense. I am sure that the CCC and yourself as chair would generally use that avenue for perception in the community over something that is not happening where you would be able to justify the correctness of where the matter is proceeding. No doubt there is a degree of common sense that applies with regard to whether or not a report needs to be identified and tabled in regards to correcting the record. Is that what you are suggesting in this case?

**Mr Barbour:** Yes, I think so. I think they would be exceptional cases where you would do that. The reasons for preparing a report are really multifaceted. I think each case needs to be looked at on its particular merits and circumstances. That is why we need to have some principles that guide us around the application of those considerations.

**Mr McDONALD:** I have a couple of questions around continuous improvement for the commission. I read the description of illicit markets and I note that illicit tobacco, chop chop and all of those things that have become very prevalent in the community are not actually included in that description. Is that something that is taken into consideration at the moment and that link to organised crime?

**Mr Barbour:** It is absolutely taken into account, but it fits within that organised crime framework.

**Mr McDONALD:** Thank you for the clarification. I will have some other questions about that in the private session. In terms of, as I said, continuous improvement, the public report highlights the implementation of 23 of the recommendations of the commission of inquiry. Can you talk to us about the current priority areas for seeing the implementation of those recommendations or progressing them?

**Mr Barbour:** As is mentioned in the public report, it is probably worth reflecting on the work that we are doing in relation to the use of seconded police officers. That is a key area and was a subject of recommendations in the commission of inquiry. We are looking at the introduction of a future model for the use and relevance and availability of seconded police officers. We are working towards having at a maximum 30 to 40 per cent of our investigative staff as seconded police officers. That is a significant reduction over time from what was originally the case pre COI reporting. That is a key factor. Certainly we have already actioned and have in place things like the separation of

lawyers from teams. We now have a dedicated corruption legal unit that sits separately to the investigations area, but works obviously extremely closely with them. That is another example of what we are doing. I think the reports effectively speak for themselves in relation to those issues.

**Mr Hunt:** My question is around workforce wellbeing, particularly the mental health of staff. Obviously CCC officers can face some confronting material and confronting scenes. QPS deaths in custody incidents spring to mind. I am interested if you could brief the committee on what you are doing in relation to the mental health and wellbeing of your staff. I am also interested in who takes responsibility for seconded police officers in that regard—is it the responsibility of the QPS and the programs that they have or do you have specific programs for them.

**Mr Barbour:** This is an area that falls with the CEO.

**Ms O'Farrell:** We have a comprehensive framework in place that applies to all commission officers—whether they are seconded police or otherwise. The benefit for the seconded police is that they can still access the support mechanisms that exist within the QPS while they are seconded to the CCC and I am aware that they do. They also have access to our support mechanisms, including our employee support scheme. If they are conducting roles that expose them to highly confronting material, they can be part of our psychological assessment screening program which many take up, as do many of our civilian officers who are exposed to high-risk and confronting activities or images in the course of their employment. We have a Mental Health First Aid training program. More than a third of our officers have completed that Mental Health First Aid training. We are now a certified Mental Health First Aid organisation as a result of the concentrated effort of training and development that we have done in mental health first aid.

As I think the committee is aware, we have developed a trauma-informed framework which will apply to both our staff and people who come in contact with the commission as complainants, subject officers or witnesses in investigations. We are not engaging in clinical duties, but the objective of the trauma-informed project and framework that we are executing is to ensure no further trauma is enforced or imposed upon a person who is dealing with the commission. We are training our intake and assessment officers who are generally the first port of call for a member of the public or a person in stress. If people have a complaint and do not know what they need to do that is a very stressful thing for some people so we are training them up at the moment in relation to how they can not only assist that person but also look after themselves in doing that work.

Obviously we do a lot of training in terms of work health and safety risk management to ensure there are risk assessments done for our investigators and our witness protection officers—anyone who is engaging in high-risk activity. When we have coercive hearings we do risk assessments of any witnesses or others who are coming into our building. That is designed to protect the health and welfare of those people but our staff, in particular.

**Mr HUNT:** You mentioned psychological testing—

**Ms O'Farrell:** Screening.

**Mr HUNT:** That is not compulsory?

**Ms O'Farrell:** No, I do not believe it is. It is not compulsory but we highly encourage people to do it. In our civilian cohort we have quite a good take-up; it is lower in the QPS cohort.

**Ms PUGH:** My question is about TikTok. I know you have a good social media policy in place but I am curious to know if you have updated it. We have updated our parliament's social media policy since TikTok's rise in popularity. I am interested to know if you have provided any advice, that you can share in the public or private session, to your team members around TikTok and the unique risks that it poses.

**Ms O'Farrell:** I will have to review the actual policy to see if there is a specific reference to that application or platform of TikTok. I am certainly not aware that any commission officer is on TikTok—certainly not in their official capacity. I cannot comment on any TikTok-ing that might occur otherwise, but certainly the social media policy references the potential for harm or risk of reputation to the CCC as a result of your social media presence. That is certainly contained within the policy but whether there is an explicit reference to TikTok, I would have to take that on notice and come back to you.

**Ms PUGH:** Excellent. I would appreciate that, thank you.

**CHAIR:** There being no further questions, we will conclude the public hearing and proceed to the private hearing.

**The committee adjourned at 11.04 am.**