



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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Hansard 18 September 1998

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Criminal Justice Commission Chairperson

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.36 a.m.), by leave: I am pleased to announce to the House today the appointment of the new chairperson of the Criminal Justice Commission. The position of chairperson of the CJC was advertised nationally in accordance with the requirements of s.11(1) of the Criminal Justice Act 1989 on 25 July and 8 August 1998. The advertisements appeared in both the Australian and the Courier-Mail newspapers on these dates. Eleven applications for the position of chairperson were received. I short-listed two applicants and convened an interview panel comprising Mr Gary Crooke, QC, barrister-at-law; Mr Peter Forster, Director, the Consultancy Bureau; Dr Glyn Davis, Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and myself as chair. Interviews of the two short-listed applicants were conducted on 11 September 1998. I wrote to the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee on 8 September outlining the process and further on 14 September seeking the committee's support in terms of s.11(4) of the Act for an appointment.

This is the beginning of a new era for the Criminal Justice Commission. As all members know, there has been controversy in the past in relation to the CJC. Today's appointment gives an opportunity for a fresh start. I appeal to all members of Parliament and to the media to give the new chairperson of the CJC a fair go to ensure that the vision of the Fitzgerald report is fulfilled. The clashes between the Courier-Mail and the CJC are almost legendary. I look forward to the CJC being taken off the front page.

I advise the House that the successful applicant, unanimously supported by the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee and me, is Mr Brendan John Butler, Senior Counsel. I am confident that Mr Butler will build on the CJC's strengths. Mr Butler has practised as a criminal lawyer in Queensland for 22 years and is qualified for appointment as a judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland. From June 1987 to September 1989, Mr Butler was counsel assisting the Fitzgerald commission of inquiry, the forerunner of the CJC. During that time, he appeared before the commission as counsel and led an investigative team of barristers and detectives. Between June and December in 1990, Mr Butler was seconded as counsel assisting the Ward 10B commission of inquiry in Townsville, which involved extensive appearances before the commission, and management and direction of the investigative work of the inquiry.

From November 1989 to July 1996, he served as Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions and served for two periods as acting director. As well, Mr Butler is a co-author of the current edition of Carter's Criminal Law of Queensland. Mr Butler brings to this position a range of skills and experience—as a lawyer, manager and investigator.

The job of chairperson of the Criminal Justice Commission is a very difficult position. But I am confident that Mr Butler has the skills and the tenacity to realise the vision that Tony Fitzgerald foresaw for the CJC, that is, an independent, impartial, professional body of great integrity which oversees the criminal justice system and helps to ensure that Queensland is a strong State where politicians, public servants and the police know that they are accountable.

Mr Butler replaces Mr Frank Clair, who has elected not to seek a further term as chairperson of the CJC. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the significant contribution that Mr Clair has made to criminal justice reform in Queensland during his time with the CJC.

I am delighted with Mr Butler's appointment and also delighted that it has the unanimous support of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. Today, on behalf of all members of Parliament, I thank them for the professional way in which they undertook the task before them. I thank the committee members for their deliberations and their work in cooperation with me on this selection. I have informed His Excellency, Governor Sir Peter Arnison, of the appointment.

I would like to advise the House that there will be some changes to the Criminal Justice Act, which I am currently working on, and those changes will be introduced to the House in the months ahead after consultation.

Could I also table for the information of the House appropriate correspondence between myself and the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee as well as the detailed curriculum vitae of Brendan John Butler and letters from the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee to me citing the unanimous support for the appointment, together with an appointment minute from the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee.

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