



Speech by

**Mr ALLAN GRICE, OAM**

**MEMBER FOR BROADWATER**

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Hansard 4 March 1999

#### **HEINER DOCUMENTS**

**Mr GRICE** (Broadwater—NPA) (6.35 p.m.): It is a shame that the Premier has such little respect for his position as Premier of this State that he comes into this House and seeks to mislead it. In the amendment the Premier states that the Connolly/Ryan inquiry made inquiries into the matter and states—

"No further action was taken as the result of any these inquiries."

The Premier knows that all of the details from the Connolly/Ryan inquiry are in the hands of the Parliamentary Commissioner. It is up to Ms Dick, the Parliamentary Commissioner, to make that decision, not a know-all, can't do anything Premier.

The Premier also says that the PCJC held an inquiry and no result came from it. The Premier knows himself that in 1992 when he was the chair of the PCJC after the CJC reported back to the PCJC on Mr Lindeberg's information, he referred it back to the CJC. He knows that. He knows also that when the PCJC does any investigation it makes a report. There was no report tabled in this House by the following chairman, Mr Davies. There was no report tabled in this House by the following chairman, Mr Lester. So the Premier is wrong. He is misleading this House in this amendment.

It is not lost on the Opposition or on those who are observing this debate and understand its deep legal and constitutional significance that should the Opposition's motion be defeated it will be on the casting vote of five senior Ministers, and possibly others on that side of the House, who desperately want to keep a lid on this cesspit of lies and corruption.

If members opposite were to ask decent, law-abiding Queenslanders whether they wanted their elected Government as a matter of practice to be able to secretly shred public records to prevent their use in court, the answer would be a resounding no. I have no doubt that the same answer would be applied to secretly shredding evidence of suspected child abuse against kids in the care and protection of the Crown in order to cover it up.

In the face of the evidence, it is quite overwhelming that the CJC never did its job thoroughly or impartially. That has never really been disputed. It has admitted itself that it did not touch all the evidence and it did not search for all the evidence. It said that in the Senate inquiry. It just ran dead and then attempted to shoot the messenger.

I table a public statement from the Australian Society of Archivists in which it states that the society—

"... also wishes to place on record its absolute rejection of the argument which the Queensland Criminal Justice Commission placed before the Senate Select Committee on Unresolved Whistleblower Cases in 1995."

It is common legal practice for solicitors to serve notice on the other party of their intention to commence court proceedings to resolve a matter. In this case, Mr Coyne's solicitors unquestionably served notice on the Government of his intention to gain access to the Heiner documents pursuant to a regulation and that, if it was not granted out of court, it would be resolved in court. That notice was acknowledged as being in the system before the shredding. The Cabinet was told that solicitors were seeking access to the document when it ordered them destroyed. In other words, Mr Coyne was prepared to exercise his democratic right to have his day in court where a judge would decide the matter. His union supported him in what was a lawful endeavour.

Any ordinary citizen knows that one cannot shred material under those circumstances. Section 129 of the Criminal Code says that one cannot do that. But here is the rub. Here is how absurd the Government's and the CJC's position is: if it is legal to do what they did, why not shred every public record that might be required for court? Shred everything in sight! Why keep public records? Why not burn down the State Archives if one cannot keep within the law or if one wants to hide something?

Here is the joke. Yesterday the Honourable the Premier waxed long and loud about his colleague who was arrested at Gordonstone as if he were fighting fascism. Let me tell the Honourable the Premier that even the Nazis and East German communists did not shred their embarrassing public records. But this Government and the previous Labor Government are hiding the fact that it was done.

For years no-one involved in this cover-up has been prepared to say "boo"—that is, of course, until a former Goss Labor Minister, Pat Comben, admitted on national television that all members of Cabinet did, in fact, know that they were approving the destruction of material that contained "material about child abuse". I will not repeat the second quote because it has been mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. Pat Comben, a senior Goss Government Minister and numbers man, has at long last given substance to the rumours suggesting that the Heiner documents contained evidence of child abuse and paedophilia. I table the full Comben transcript.

Time expired.

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