



Speech by
Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Wednesday, 25 November 2009

**MOTION: CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION INQUIRY;
GOVERNMENT GRANTS**

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (5.58 pm): I rise to oppose the motion and support the amendment. The motion states that the current inquiry needs to be expanded to look at the awarding of all grants from all departments where staff from a ministerial office have been involved. This motion is preposterous and fails to have any regard for the important work that is undertaken in this state by the Crime and Misconduct Commission, and it is an old trick. When you want to nobble an organisation and when you do not want to support them, what do you do? You tie them up. You let them run around in cycles. You take them away from the duties that they are supposed to perform and get them concentrating on nothing more but witch-hunts and nothing more but preposterous allegations. Rather than allowing the CMC to go about its important business of combating serious crime and misconduct in Queensland, members opposite prefer to seek to divert it into politically partisan investigations where there is no suggestion of any misconduct or impropriety at all.

Once again, this side of the House is forced to remind the opposition that the CMC is independent. It does not, nor should it, take direction from the parliament, particularly when there is no evidence and when those who are proposing to refer this stuff lack any credibility and are interested only in embarking upon yet another witch-hunt.

I can only assume that the members opposite are not aware of the important work that is done by the CMC. So I will take this opportunity to put on the record, and acquaint the opposition with, some of the activities that the CMC has carried out in the past year. Under the category of preventing and combating crime, the CMC carried out no fewer than 17 investigations into organised criminal groups and paedophilia rings, all of which resulted in arrests and charges. Investigative hearings were conducted in relation to 31 major crime investigations, with 157 days of hearings in Brisbane and throughout Queensland. The proceeds of crime team obtained 78 restraining orders over property valued at more than \$24 million.

In promoting high standards of integrity and reducing misconduct in the public sector, the following activities were undertaken. Following a complex investigation by the CMC, former Queensland government minister Gordon Nuttall and Queensland businessmen Kenneth Talbot and Harold Shand were committed to stand trial. Did anybody ever suggest that because of that every minister, every member of parliament, every businessman throughout Queensland now needed to be investigated? Of course not. The motion is preposterous and it makes absolutely no sense.

Over the course of Operation Capri, some 25 police officers were referred to the QPS for disciplinary action. The CMC also conducts a witness protection service and in that has been 100 per cent successful in 21 years of service. The CMC has also produced a number of publications and investigative reports into a number of areas to prevent crime and misconduct—publications such as *Managing public records responsibly* and *Blowing the whistle in Queensland* and research reports such as *Interactions between police and young people* and *Perceptions of misconduct in Queensland correctional institutions: a survey of custodial officers*.

Only just last week the chairman handed down a report on policing in Indigenous communities. The CMC is also continuing its ongoing work with the QPS on the use of tasers. All of this work is important. All of this work is based on evidence and there are substantial reasons for it to be undertaken. That work deserves the full attention of the hardworking officers of the CMC. They do not need to be distracted by references from a beleaguered opposition that is bereft of policy initiatives and which seeks to waste the time and the money of not only the parliament but also the independent statutory agencies of government to trawl for anything that they can come up with. The CMC through its misconduct jurisdiction has more than enough investigatory powers—search, surveillance and seizure powers—to investigate issues and to carry out its important work.

It is not as though the opposition has a scintilla of evidence upon which to base an investigation. It just blindly wants to refer to the CMC the awarding of all grants by all government departments in the vain hope that it may uncover something. In the words of the member for Southern Downs, I say that this motion is ill conceived and 'de-necessary'. The CMC has better things to do with its time. It does not need to waste money on what is contained in this motion. It is preposterous and it is a disgrace. We will vote for the amendment and vote down the opposition's motion.