



Speech by

Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Hansard Thursday, 31 May 2012

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMITTEE: REPORT, MOTION TO TAKE NOTE

Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.27 am): As members know, the PCMC is required to conduct its review of the CMC, which it has done, and we now have that report tabled by the chair at the time, Dr Alex Douglas, the member for Gaven. The review commenced in May 2011, with the call for submissions and then public hearings took place. For the time of the review and the report, the PCMC was comprised of the former members of that committee. The report examined such items as the chairmanship of the CMC, the functions of the CMC, the misconduct function, the investigative powers and hearings, witness protection functions, the role in public interest disclosures—that is, whistleblowers—and of course the oversight of the CMC. The report made 38 recommendations, including legislative amendments to the CMA, changes to the operations and procedures of the CMC, directions to successive PCMCs about the matters which will be closely monitored and requests for the CMC to be resourced adequately to carry out certain of its functions. The Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 provides that the government is to provide a response to that report within three months—that is, by 10 August. If this cannot be achieved, then an interim report is to be tabled within six months, which is obviously by 9 November.

Given the extensive nature of the report and the 38 recommendations, I as Attorney-General am currently in the process of reviewing the recommendations made by the committee. My department has also sent the report to other departments because we have to seek guidance and advice from other departmental officers in other ministerial offices. Therefore, I am not in a position at the outset to give an indication of what the government's intention will be on that report. Suffice it to say, I will address two matters. The first is the chairman of the PCMC, the case for which was adequately made by the Manager of Government Business, the member for Mermaid Beach.

The imputation that the member for Bundamba made today follows the imputation she made in this House last night against the member for Logan and the candidate who ran against her. I raise this point because it just shows the gutter that the Labor Party in Queensland continues to be in.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for South Brisbane, because of course during the last state election campaign the member for South Brisbane was in fact the assistant secretary or deputy secretary of the Queensland Labor Party. The member for South Brisbane was the one directly behind those ads we saw on TV attacking Campbell Newman and his family. It was shameful, and Queenslanders said it was shameful. And then the Labor Party had the hide to put her up for preselection for such worthy representation when Queensland overwhelmingly rejected the Labor Party campaign because Queenslanders believe in fairness! What was portrayed in the election campaign was certainly not fair.

Mr PITT: I rise to a point of order. I rise to seek a ruling on relevance under standing order 118. I do not think this is actually the tone of the debate for the adoption of this report.

Madam SPEAKER: I will ask the minister to address the motion before the House.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That was the lily pad to the point I am about to jump on to, and the point I am jumping on to of course is to support the Independent member for Gladstone as chair of the PCMC. She will do a fantastic job in that role. In fact, the report also makes recommendations in relation to election activities, and this is why I was making the point. During the campaign the former member for Mount Coot-tha, Andrew Fraser, continually referred matters to the CMC. The Labor Party has used the CMC as a political football for far too long. During the election campaign three matters were referred to the CMC and the CMC had to come back and say on all matters that no investigation was required into the Premier—no matters.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections in the chamber. I call the minister.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I can understand the interjections being made, because the member for Bundamba was a member of the former government and participated in that negative, vile campaign against the Premier and his family. Queenslanders never want to see that again in this state. That is why I have said that we will review the CMC's operations in terms of how politicians on all sides can use the CMC, but in this case the Labor Party used the CMC for its own political trickery and of course there was no case to answer. The former Premier said, 'I've got no evidence but the CMC should investigate it.' It is shameful that the Labor Party used the CMC in that process.