




Speech by

Peter Wellington

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard Wednesday, 31 October 2012

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (5.46 pm): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise to participate in the debate on the report of the estimates committee hearing of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for the portfolio of Justice and Attorney-General. I start by acknowledging the great work that the staff did to support the committee members. I note that one of the first series of questions that we put during the hearing was to the Crime and Misconduct Commission chairman, Mr Ross Martin. I think Mr Martin is doing a very good job with great staff, and it is a credit to him that he is able to get some real results for Queenslanders.

It is a little bit disappointing that many people do not really understand what the Crime and Misconduct Commission does and the good work they do. It is interesting to note that on the very morning of our estimates committee hearing—at six o'clock I understand—a press release was issued from the Attorney-General's office to announce that the government was going to undertake a review of the Crime and Misconduct Act. Talk about timing!

Isn't it amazing that in the Crime and Misconduct Commission's annual report, which runs to over 125 pages, at page 67 I understand they refer to the oversight and review of the CMC's activities. They noted that the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee commenced an investigation into the CMC's activities and it started, believe it or not, in May 2011. It was completed in May 2012 this year and was tabled in parliament. I understand that we still have not had a response from the Attorney-General, the chief law officer, to the range of recommendations. If I remember rightly, there were 38 significant recommendations. So in May this year the report was tabled. The estimates committee hearing was held on 11 October. At six o'clock on the morning of that hearing the Attorney-General announced that the government was going to undertake an investigation into the CMC Act. Yet in September this year the Deputy Premier was reported in the *Courier-Mail* as saying that the government would look at legislation with regard to the CMC. I table that for the benefit of all members.

Tabled paper: Courier-Mail article, dated 28 September 2012, titled 'Deputy Premier Jeff Seeney wants legislation to remove Crime and Misconduct Commission from political process' [[1454](#)].

I believe that what we are seeing here is quite clearly a deliberate strategy by this government, by the chief law officer of this state—the Attorney-General—by the Premier to try to change the powers of the CMC Act. Why else on the very morning of the estimates hearing did they announce that they were going to undertake an investigation of the powers of the CMC when they have not even responded to the range of significant recommendations that members of this parliament and members of the previous parliament supported in relation to that very legislation?

I note that the day after our committee hearing the ABC's 7.30 followed up the issue about the estimates committee and put a question to the chairman of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee, the member for Gladstone, Liz Cunningham. My recollection of that interview is along the lines that the interviewer noted that Mrs Cunningham was the chairman of the Parliamentary Crime and

Misconduct Committee and that one of the jobs of the committee was to oversee the Crime and Misconduct Commission; in fact, her words were that the committee reviews the CMC every three years. She was then asked, 'Do you need another separate review?' That was the specific question put to the chairman of the PCMC, and the member for Gladstone is on the record with her response.

I certainly do not want to go into the inner discussions of the PCMC because I am a member of that committee, but can I say quite frankly that I believe the member for Gladstone should have said that the committee has not formed an opinion in relation to the government's agenda to review the CMC. The comments that the member for Gladstone went on to give were her own personal views, so I put that on the record here and now. We have not got a committee meeting until Friday and I will certainly take this matter up with my colleagues then. I just want to put on the record now that I believe the views the member for Gladstone put on the public record the day after our estimates hearing were not the views of the PCMC; they were her own personal views, which coincidentally seem to be lock, stock and barrel side by side the views of the Deputy Premier and the government of this state.

Members, we need to look at what is the bigger agenda that this government is pursuing on this issue. What is the bigger issue? How much will it cost to have this further investigation of the CMC? I think these are real questions that Queenslanders need to ask because, as I stand here, I understand that we still have not got a response from the Attorney-General to the 38 recommendations.

(Time expired)