




Speech By
Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (2.05 pm): If there is one thing that every parliament must do, it is to maintain its integrity. No parliament will retain the confidence of the people if it loses its integrity. I am not the first person to say this, and I expect I will not be the last. Certainly, I am not the only Australian parliamentarian to share this view. Addressing the University of Melbourne in December 2012, former Labor minister Senator John Faulkner hit the nail on the head when he said—

Politics and parliament are seen by too many as inimical to integrity. There is a cynicism about politicians and their motives, not only here in Australia, but in many Western democracies.

This cynicism is corrosive of democracy because it undermines the contract between elector and elected ...

I would urge all honourable members to take careful heed of Senator Faulkner's remarks because if there is one group of people striking at the very heart of this parliament's integrity, it is the Australian Labor Party and their so-called independent allies.

It is a matter of great regret that I am compelled to draw the House's attention to these matters today. I refer in particular to the unrelenting public campaign being waged against Dr Ken Levy, the Acting Chairman of the CMC. No media outlet is safe from these unrestrained outbursts—television, radio, the press, Facebook, Twitter.

Honourable colleagues, let me demonstrate. The Leader of the Opposition, who sat on the PCMC for a period of time, has said, 'Dr Levy is the illegitimate chair of the Crime and Misconduct Commission.' This was in the *Brisbane Times* on 14 November 2013. I table a copy of that.

She further said, 'And it can only operate into the future with full public confidence if Dr Levy resigns today.' That was in the *Courier-Mail* on 8 November 2013. I table a copy of that.

'Queenslanders can no longer have confidence in him remaining as the chair of the independent CMC.' That was on ABC News on 11 November 2013. I table a copy of that.

'He should fall on his sword today. He should resign ...' That was on ABC 7.30 *Queensland* on 8 November 2013. I table a copy of that.

'Watch my interview with @MattWordsworth on @7.30qld regarding the CMC and the reason why Dr Levy should resign.' That was on Twitter on 8 November 2013. I table a copy of that.

'Dr Levy's actions have raised serious fundamental issues into the independence of the Crime & Misconduct Commission and he must be replaced.' That was on Twitter on 8 November 2013. I table a copy of that.

'The @QLDLabor Opposition believes that to protect the independence of the Crime and Misconduct must resign.' That was the honourable opposition leader on Twitter on 8 November 2013. I table a copy of that.

'Dr Levy must resign.' That was on Facebook—

Ms PALASZCZUK: I rise to a point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: Attorney-General, take your seat. What is your point of order?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I understand that these matters concerning Dr Levy are currently before the committee. The chair of the committee has urged all members not to make any statements.

Madam SPEAKER: Please take your seat. Honourable members, matters that are not able to be discussed are those that are before the parliamentary Ethics Committee. The matters that are before the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee, unless they are subject specifically to confidentiality provisions, can be discussed publicly. So there are different publication requirements between some of the committees, but they should be quite express in respect of information before those committees as to what is in the public domain. That matter is not out of order. I call the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I continue, 'Dr Levy must resign.' That was posted on Facebook on 9 November 2013 by the opposition leader, and I table a copy.

This is in stark contrast to the Leader of the Opposition's attitude when the former head of the CMC, Mr Ross Martin SC, was under some criticism earlier this year. On that occasion the Leader of the Opposition said, 'This inquiry needs to be truly independent and the executive needs to butt out.' That was in the *Courier-Mail* on 8 March 2013, and I table a copy of that.

The Labor leader adopts a different attitude depending on the circumstances but is now giving instructions to her followers and they have taken up the cudgels with glee—free from any notion of fairness. The member for South Brisbane said on Twitter on 8 November: '@TBadrack maybe its because @theqldpremier thinks statutory independence of a misconduct commission is "more an American thing"' The member for South Brisbane said: '@AnnastaciaMP The old Nationals wanted to destroy the CMC—the current LNP want to control it. Dr Levy's position is untenable.' That was on Twitter on 8 November 2013, and I table a copy.

The member for Bundamba said, 'Has the LNP Appointed Acting Chair of the CMC jeopardised the independence of the CMC?' That was on Facebook on 1 November 2013, and I table a copy of that documentation.

What is particularly disconcerting in this case is the fact that these two members are both members of the PCMC who are currently sitting in judgement of Dr Levy. Can anyone expect them to deliberate on this matter in an unbiased manner when their leader has told them what to think and they have shown their true colours well before the committee has come to any form of conclusion?

However, it is more grave that I bring to the attention of the House that the hypocrisy does not stop with the opposition. The member for Nicklin is recorded as saying, 'I no longer have confidence in Dr Levy's independence heading the most powerful organisation in Queensland.' That was in a *Brisbane Times* article on 1 November 2013, and I table a copy.

He also said, 'You [are] using your position to effectively become a puppet for the government.' That was on the ABC News online on 1 November 2013, and I table a copy of that report.

The member for Nicklin, who is the loudest proclaimer of his own integrity, is also a member of the PCMC. Let him tell this House how anyone could believe he is unbiased. The Leader of the Palmer United Party, the member for Gaven, who constantly reminds us all of his experience on the PCMC and Ethics Committee joined the chorus on 1 November as well by saying, 'By being a third party endorser of a government before legislation actually has a chance to be tested is in fact not what his role is. So by default he must stand down.' That was on the ABC News online on 1 November 2013.

I also refer, more concerning, to a longstanding bitterness towards Dr Levy displayed by the honourable member for Bundamba. Ever since the honourable member left the department of justice in 1996 she has blamed Dr Ken Levy, the then deputy director-general and acting director-general, for her predicament. When the then Justice of the Peace branch was restructured, the honourable member sought a voluntary redundancy but believed obstacles were placed in her path. From that time the honourable member believed that Dr Levy engineered or assisted in engineering her departure from the department of justice.

This process, I hasten to add, has been fundamentally tainted from the start. I submit, Madam Speaker, that the member for Bundamba should have admitted her direct conflict of interest and recused herself from the outset. The current hearings before the PCMC allow the honourable member to exact her revenge. Labor and its cohorts have conspired to tear down a great Queensland public servant. Their actions reek of bias and are a complete disdain for due process. They have judged this matter and denied natural justice before the hearings have even concluded.

In light of these public remarks, and in all seriousness, I call on the independent chair of the PCMC to immediately review the appropriateness or otherwise of these members continuing to perform their role on the PCMC.

Tabled paper: Bundle of recent news articles, Facebook and Twitter statements by the Leader of the Opposition, Ms Anastacia Palaszczuk MP, the member for South Brisbane, Ms Jackie Trad MP, the member for Bundamba, Mrs Jo-Ann Miller MP, and the member for Nicklin, Mr Peter Wellington MP, calling for the removal of the acting chairperson of the Crime and Misconduct Commission [\[4087\]](#).