




Speech By
Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 20 November 2013

MOTION: PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMITTEE

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (3.11 am), in reply: I will start with the member for South Brisbane. I think the biggest admission that we heard this evening in this debate was from the member for South Brisbane saying that the PCMC is unable to deal with these matters impartially because it is political. If that is the view of the member for South Brisbane, did she hold that view two weeks ago when this started? Did the member for South Brisbane have that view when she sat and made public commentary condemning Dr Ken Levy, thinking the whole time that the PCMC can never deal with this because it is political? That is the admission that the member for South Brisbane just made: the PCMC is unable to deal with this matter because it is political. Now she is calling for some judicial inquiry.

Again I say to the member for South Brisbane: I made the allegation of bias in the past 48 hours and the committee has all but confirmed that apprehension of bias by making sure that the PCMC is not dealing with this matter anymore. When the member for Bundamba made her contribution, she talked about the PCMC being able to deal with this, that it was impartial, that she was the deputy chair, that they were all in there holding hands and singing *Kumbaya*, but that is not just true, because the member for Bundamba would have the same attitude as the member for South Brisbane, that is, that the PCMC does not have the ability and would not have the ability to deal with this matter.

This process was tainted from the outset and it should have been stopped earlier. The process was tainted when the Leader of the Opposition, on 1 November, waltzed in and booted the member for South Brisbane off the committee and made a political statement and started a political witch-hunt for Dr Ken Levy. That is when this stunt started and that is when the witch-hunt began. The Leader of the Opposition will stand condemned, because she would have started that witch-hunt based on information the member for Bundamba and the member for South Brisbane gave the opposition leader. They said, 'Come in and get this guy.' That is what has happened here. We see it now for what it is: a political witch-hunt by those biased members on a committee.

Again I make the point that if the members of the PCMC were not biased, why are not they hearing the matter today? Why are not they hearing the matter tomorrow? They are not, because they have taken it out of the jurisdiction of the PCMC, recognising the fact that there are biased members on that committee who cannot deal impartially with these matters in a bipartisan way and were going to pass judgement in that political witch-hunt on Dr Ken Levy.

We hear the member for Bundamba talk about the CMC and that this government is out to get the CMC. We are reforming the CMC to make it an organisation that fights crime, an organisation that spends its \$50 million of taxpayer's money wisely, an organisation that stops itself from self-destructing from the inside out. To see that, one has to only read former Australian Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty's report into the CMC. It is not enough for the member opposite, the member for Bundamba, to talk about the toxic culture in the CMC that Dr Ken Levy has to deal with as

he charges ahead with the reforms to the CMC. They do not believe Mick Keelty and I guess now that I have tabled that document, he will be next on the list. They will call for his resignation because he has provided a report on the CMC. As far as the Labor Party goes, anyone who opposes or offers a contrary view to the Labor Party is a target and is not independent. The Labor Party thinks that anyone who does not agree with it should be condemned, should be slaughtered, should be cut-off at the head. That is what the Labor Party thinks.

Let us look at the report from former Australian Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty. If the Labor Party does not think there is enough in that report, which I tabled today, it only needs look at the PCMC report on the CMC itself produced some months ago. One of the first recommendations of the PCMC report into the CMC is that there should be a structural change to the CMC. It is not working effectively. In fact, they said that the position of chairman should be split, there should be a CEO position and the chairman should not have the pressure that chairmen such as Dr Ken Levy and others have had to deal with. We have announced a structural reform process. Dr Ken Levy, pursuant to Mick Keelty's advice today in the report, is doing a great job in trying to reform the CMC against all obstacles and against a toxic culture in the CMC that does not like the change. If it is not the Mick Keelty report that the Labor Party should rely on and if it is not the former PCMC report that the Labor Party should rely on, perhaps it should rely on the report of the honourable Ian Callinan and Professor Aroney. How much more evidence does the Labor Party need to say that we have a problem in the CMC and we have to have structural reform within CMC? That is what we are going to be doing.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. This is not about shutting things down; it is about opening it up and allowing the opportunity for a gentleman with a long and distinguished career in the Public Service to defend himself against allegations. He has been denied natural justice up until this point in time. We have a PCMC committee that was tainted from the outset. I submit to the House that it should have been shut down as soon as the Leader of the Opposition made it a political witch-hunt of Dr Ken Levy. As soon as the member for Nicklin started making public comments that Dr Ken Levy should resign, he should have recused himself from the committee. As soon as the member for Inala made comments that Dr Levy should resign, she should have recused herself from the committee. As soon as the member for Bundamba tweeted on Facebook that Dr Ken Levy should resign, she should have recused herself from the committee. As soon as the member for South Brisbane tweeted on Facebook that Dr Ken Levy should resign, she should have recused herself from the committee. As soon as the opposition leader put a tweet out that said the Queensland Labor opposition believed Dr Ken Levy should have resigned, they should all have recused themselves from the committee because Dr Ken Levy was never going to get a fair trial. He was never going to get a fair hearing with the likes of the member for Nicklin making public comments and the Labor Party making public comments. He was never going to get a fair trial. It was always in the Labor Party opposition's mind that it was going to be a trial by media. That is the submissions from speakers tonight.

When we talk about the contact between relevant people, there is no crime in the chairman of the CMC talking to people. That is no crime. There are lots of accusations that he should not have particular contact. In fact, I might remind members of a couple of the provisions in the CMC act, particularly section 59(1) which expressly requires the CMC and units of public administration to work cooperatively to achieve optimal use of available resources. The CMC also has a statutory charge or responsibility in section 8 to be part of the prevention of major crime, as do sections 7, 8, 23, 25A, 26 and 275. The investigation of major crime, specifically in the form of criminal activity, including drug trafficking and violence, engaging members of criminal motorcycle gangs and associates is expressly contemplated in section 27(1)(b), the fourth dot point.

The CMC have a role and responsibility to work with all levels of government to fight major crime in Queensland, just as we are tackling the issue of criminal motorcycle gangs in the state. So then we have the member for Bundamba. Not only have they already judged that Dr Ken Levy has misled the committee, but now the member for Bundamba is accusing everyone of corruption. We have gone from allegations of misleading committees to corruption. Where does it end with the Labor Party? Where does the gutter politics end with the Labor Party? It is a big sewer. It is a big, deep sewer. Members of the Labor Party spend most of their time in that big, deep sewer.

Through this motion tonight we are giving the parliament the opportunity, firstly, to recognise the fact that this committee process was biased and tainted from the outset. Secondly, I am submitting to parliament this evening that the committee process was not only tainted but should have been fixed when it started on 1 November. We have now also heard the comments of the chair of the committee—as the honourable the Treasurer quoted earlier—in relation to perceived bias by members. Hence the PCMC is not going to be dealing with this anymore.

In conclusion, this is a political witch-hunt by the Labor Party. I draw the attention of the House to the first item of the motion where it says 'the chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commission, the PCMC'. Obviously there is an administrative error there. It is the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee.