




Speech By
Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 7 May 2014

CRIME AND MISCONDUCT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.22 pm), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate on the Crime and Misconduct and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. It has been quite a journey to reach the point we are at today. In October 2012, the government appointed an independent advisory panel consisting of the Hon. Ian Callinan AC and Professor Nicholas Aroney to review the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 and related matters. Callinan and Aroney received more than 60 written submissions and sought information from certain key interested persons, including the CMC, to inform their view. During the period that Callinan and Aroney were conducting their review, it was revealed that certain confidential Fitzgerald inquiry documentation had been publicly released following incorrect classification by the CMC or destroyed.

On 8 March 2013, I moved a motion in this House pursuant to section 292(d) of the Crime and Misconduct Act that the PCMC inquire into and report by 5 April on the incorrect classification and release or destruction of the documents and related matters. In March 2013, the PCMC held public hearings and on 5 April the PCMC tabled in the Legislative Assembly its Report No. 90, *Inquiry into the Crime and Misconduct Commission's release and destruction of Fitzgerald Commission of Inquiry documents*. On 3 July 2013, the government tabled in the Legislative Assembly its response to both of those reviews. Earlier this year, the bill was introduced and subsequently subjected to consideration by the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, which included public hearings by the committee on the bill.

The government firmly believes that the bill will lead to improvements in the public confidence in the CMC, the timeliness of the investigation of complaints, operation and corporate governance structures within the CMC, the current culture within the CMC, CMC internal complaints management systems for misconduct matters, internal processes and practices in the CMC, and the management of personal conduct and work performance of Queensland Public Service employees. Now I will address some of the matters raised by honourable members during the course of this debate.

There was little from the Leader of the Opposition except a pointless history lesson from which she removed any reference to the corruption that categorised the Labor governments that controlled Queensland from the 1920s and the 1950s. Like a drunk uses a lamppost, the leader used her arguments for support rather than illumination. She has swallowed hook, line and sinker Mr Fitzgerald's warped view that, after 25 years, the evil Mr John Sosso has emerged from the National Native Title Tribunal to wreak havoc on those who, in Mr Fitzgerald's opinion, did something to thwart Mr Sosso's perverted schemes from the late 1980s. If that was not such a terribly sad reflection on those who make such outlandish accusations, it would be hilarious. It makes Philby, Burgess and Maclean appear rank amateurs. They hid their allegiance to the Soviet Union for less than 20 years before fleeing to Moscow upon discovery as spies. Mr Sosso has outdone them in his devious behaviour. If what the leader asserts about Mr John Sosso is true, people will be writing

books about him in the future. Alternatively, the Labor leader's colleagues could take her aside and insist she end these crazy allegations. I suspect Cameron Dick would not so easily fall into Mr Fitzgerald's trap. This is a joke and so are those who make such an extraordinary allegation, unsupported by a single scrap of evidence.

Regrettably, such a view characterises much of what Labor has to say on the CMC reforms. If the leadership disasters that have characterised the CMC over recent years represent the best of bipartisanship, it is no wonder that the process is being changed. Bipartisanship constitutes leadership by the lowest common denominator, that is, the only people likely to be selected are those against whom no-one has an objection, irrespective of the soundness of those objectives. If it has stood the test of time, as the leader asserts, why was the leadership of Mr Martin such an unmitigated disaster? Is this the best bipartisanship can deliver? If Labor members do not think the events of last year were a disaster, they need to take a good hard look at themselves. No sensible person thinks the CMC covered itself with glory in 2013. I am tempted to ask Labor what it has to fear from an investigator and chairman whose appointment would owe nothing to his or her capacity to cuddle up to the ALP in an unseemly display designed to garner favour and gain appointment. The leader of the Labor Party lives in a fantasy land. She is trapped in the past where the lucky few have a black and white television, and drinkers leave the pub at six o'clock and return home to turn on the bakelite radio to listen to Mr Gair debating Mr Nicklin. Most Queenslanders have moved on.

What does Labor promise? It promises nothing about improving the performance of the CMC in fighting corruption and major crime—nothing about improving that performance. It promises nothing but a return to the same sort of mystical partisanship, as if that alone will ensure the success of the fight against crime in all its manifestations.

In his contribution the member for Rockhampton said that nobody lost a testicle or a kidney following the CMC's misadventures, but there is no doubt the member and his leader have lost their composure and their grasp on reality. The member has faithfully read aloud the words crafted by Labor's 22 staff members. It is clear he neither understands nor believes half of what he said. I waited in breathless expectation for him to clarify what his leader said, but I waited in vain. After listening, I was neither wiser nor better informed. If the member is going to read everything put before him, he should at least pretend to know what he is talking about. Like his leader, he recycled Mr Fitzgerald's fantasy about Mr Sosso and added to the conspiracy with his invitation that people 'join the dots'.

The member's forensic skills are outstanding! I suspect the member for Rockhampton does not believe that Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the moon in 1969, such is his belief in conspiracy theories. The member is little more than a hired mouthpiece with no capacity for independent thought. He is a disgrace. In his two years in this House he has added virtually nothing to the deliberations of the House. The only comfort we can draw from his contribution is that he is no longer a member of Australia's armed forces, potentially threatening the wellbeing and lives of our citizens with his ham-fisted and bumbling efforts.

I turn to the member for Bundamba. There was nothing new from the member for Bundamba but a renewed outburst of abuse. When contemplating the contribution of the honourable member for Bundamba I am drawn inevitably towards that old saying: 'An empty vessel makes the most noise.' The only thing I can say in her defence is that she spoke with more passion than her leader or the honourable member for Rockhampton.

The member for Woodridge was not happy with the power of veto. Unfortunately, the member for Woodridge would only be happy if Labor had complete control of all public institutions and their membership—having a CEO as a member of the commission. The ALP wants to go back to the old system that proved to be a complete failure in 2013. Even former chairman Mr Ross Martin at page 8 of his submission recommended the CEO be a member of the commission. The member for Woodridge, honourable colleagues, added little to the debate and what she did contribute owed little to her own intellectual endeavour.

While I may not have always agreed with the member for Gladstone's views on all matters relating to the CMC, I value the contribution she made tonight. It was considered and based on personal experience. The member for Gladstone wanted clarification of whether the PCMC could veto the chairman. Yes, the chairman is also a commissioner and the PCMC can veto all the commissioners in the commission, which I understand is about five people.

The member for Redcliffe was also obsessed by her own version of history. Unfortunately for her, quoting Mr Fitzgerald will catch not one more criminal nor halt one example of corruption. It is

time to move into the 21st century—something even Bill Shorten is trying to do with the ALP, but something that escapes the Queensland ALP.

Honourable members, this is about making sure we have a strong, independent corruption watchdog. This is about making sure that the events of the last two years never happen again in Queensland and that people can have confidence when they refer a matter to the CMC that it will be investigated in a non-political way and not by Labor Party operatives. That is why it is so important to mention these contributions.

Given all the issues with the CMC in the last two years, the honourable opposition leader, in her 50-minute contribution, did not even say that the CMC shredded Fitzgerald documents, did not even say that they put the lives of whistleblowers at risk. Some 50 minutes of debate—

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the opposition leader who said that we have had that debate. So we had a little debate about the unauthorised release of documentation and the shredding of Fitzgerald documents and the opposition leader says, 'We had that debate, let's move on.' We cannot move on with the same structures for the CMC. This is why this bill is so important. I commend the bill to the House.