




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 20 April 2016

CRIME AND CORRUPTION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (5.55 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015. It should be noted that the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee is currently undertaking a statutory review of the Crime and Corruption Act 2001 and this committee is due to report back to the Queensland parliament by 30 June 2016. This statutory review is occurring at the same time as this bill is being debated. That is why the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee could not reach agreement on whether or not the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015 should be passed. I believe, as does the LNP, that any major structural reform to the Crime and Corruption Commission should wait until after this review is finalised.

What the Palaszczuk Labor government is proposing with this bill is to deliver on a broad range of legislative election commitments. These are commitments that I have discussed with many of my constituents in my electorate of Moggill and I agree entirely with them that these amendments do not strengthen the Crime and Corruption Commission. That is why I and my LNP colleagues are unsupportive of Labor's proposals.

It is important to note that the proposed changes to the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015 have not arisen from an independent review of the Crime and Corruption Commission, which is what one would expect. Alternatively, the amendments that the then LNP government implemented in 2014 came about following recommendations from a review that was undertaken by former High Court judge Ian Callinan and UQ law professor Nicholas Aroney. These 2014 amendments were implemented after over 60 public submissions were received and 17 well-documented recommendations were received from that review of the then Crime and Misconduct Act 2001. That review, which was undertaken in 2014, noted that very early on a high number of complaints processed by the then Crime and Misconduct Commission were trivial, vexatious and/or misdirected. It should be noted that the reception and disposition of so many such complaints are functions that have to be performed by publicly funded staff and that comes at considerable public expense to the taxpayer. The review then offered strategies as to how to deal with baseless complaints so that proper and sufficient attention could be given to the genuine and substantial complaints. I have to ask if the Palaszczuk Labor government is once again just undoing previous amendments undertaken by the former LNP government because Labor has no plan other than to undo what the previous government accomplished.

Recently during local government elections the Crime and Corruption Commission was again used as a political tool to smear opponents. In fact, the Local Government Association of Queensland's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Greg Hallam, stated that the 2016 local government elections were the worst he had seen for this and after it was expressly asked of candidates not to use the Crime and Corruption Commission for this purpose. It was on 8 February 2016 that the Crime and Corruption Commission and the Local Government Association of Queensland issued a joint media release urging

candidates not to make baseless complaints to the Crime and Corruption Commission. To further compound baseless complaints, some individuals then sought to publish the fact that a complaint had been made so as to cause maximum reputational damage to others.

At the time it was well reported that the Crime and Corruption Commission was not discouraging people from making genuine complaints but it was asking them to be honest and not to risk their own campaign by making false complaints. As we are well aware, that request was not heeded and, again, like in 2012, the Crime and Corruption Commission was used in a smear campaign against the sitting Lord Mayor of Brisbane. It is also no secret that, during the 2012 state election campaign, certain Labor Party members used the Crime and Corruption Commission as a tool to smear political opponents.

It is important to note that, during the recent local government elections, some complaints to the Crime and Corruption Commission emanated from the department of local government—the department that the Deputy Premier administers. In my professional experience, often what goes together with respect to antisocial behaviour and associated cluster B personality disorders can be elucidated as harassment, bullying, intimidation, the use of foul language and vexatious complaints. For some in our community, this can be their dysfunctional modus operandi. I conclude as I commenced by saying that any major structural reform to the Crime and Corruption Commission should wait until the statutory review of the act is finalised by 30 June 2016.