



Speech By
Michael Crandon

MEMBER FOR COOMERA

Record of Proceedings, 10 November 2016

SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (4.22 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 and report No. 42 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, of which I am the deputy chair. The bill was referred to the committee on 13 September 2016 with a report back date of 1 November 2016—the same report back date as the two bills relating to child sexual abuse that were dealt with by this House on Tuesday of this week. Three bills, very different issues to consider but only a very short time frame to do it in and, as noted by the member for Capalaba on Tuesday in his contribution to the debate on the child sexual abuse bills, they were toughies to deal with. On top of those two toughies, we had to deal with the 445 pages of the bill itself and the 179 pages of the explanatory notes. That is what we had to deal with in a very short period of time while also dealing with the very complex and difficult issue around the child sexual abuse bills.

We are focused on the job of delivering reports on bills referred to the committee. After all, it is part of our role here. That pertains to not just us, but our secretariat needs to juggle priorities between these complex pieces of legislation. Once again, that is their job and they do not complain; they do a wonderful job for us and do the best they possibly can. Having said that, with the time lines being as tight as they are, I wonder how others are meant to absorb it all.

I speak in this instance about the hearings on the Gold Coast where Gold Coast City councillor for division 10, Paul Taylor, gave evidence, having been invited the previous week. The councillor tabled a letter from the Gold Coast Mayor, Tom Tate, made an initial statement and then proceeded to answer questions. To clarify, the hearing was on Tuesday, 4 October—the day after the public holiday long weekend. I have seen correspondence regarding witnesses from the Wednesday before—28 September. I have been advised that Paul Taylor was asked to attend on 27 September and that he was away from his office until that Friday, so he had just a few days notice. Clearly in Councillor Taylor's case he is not giving any technical evidence, so you would not expect that he would have read this 445 pages in the few days leading up to 4 October and the 179 pages of the explanatory notes. However, the chair of this committee had every expectation that he should have done that, and that is attested to in the actual transcript of the hearings.

Councillor Taylor is not giving technical evidence; he is providing his views on several things based on his local knowledge and on behalf of his constituents—for example, what things were like prior to September 2013, what things were like following the implementation of the VLAD laws, what he fears will occur if the laws are watered down, what his observations are regarding the creeping back in of the bikies, what his concerns are for his patch, what his concerns are for his constituents and what his concerns are for the whole of the Gold Coast community. Other examples are his opinion on what the act of not wearing colours means and how easy it is to pick a group of musclebound, T-shirt-wearing,

belligerent-looking bikies, whether they are riding motorbikes or not, whether they have tattoos or not, whether they are wearing colours or not. In support of the point I am making, in response to a question from me around the wearing of colours, Councillor Taylor said—

I do fail to see the difference, but the way I can see it over the years I have lived here and watched the previous gangs come into town, they do not have to have any identification on. When there is a group of people it is like anything: you get a group of people and there could be trouble. When we get people like the Vietnam vets who come down, we know they are Vietnam vets, we know they are there, which is great, but when you get a motorcycle gang come down where there is 10, 15, 20 of them ... there could be trouble here—‘could be trouble’ I am saying—and nine times out of 10—

with those motorcycle gangs—

there probably is.

Councillor Taylor was giving his views as a resident, as a local and as the local councillor. During proceedings the member for Capalaba asked Councillor Taylor a few questions about whether he had read the bill, and I alluded to that a short while ago, or the explanatory notes. The councillor confirmed he had not. The member for Capalaba asked if the councillor had told the Broadwater Alliance or the Surfers Paradise Alliance not to attend as witnesses. Councillor Taylor said that he had not. He further advised the committee that he was a member of the Broadwater committee—honest answers. First of all, he is giving his views and then he is confirming certain things for the committee. A little background now—

Mrs Stuckey: Being helpful.

Mr CRANDON: Being helpful; precisely. A little background: the committee had received verbal indications that council had told the Broadwater Alliance and the Surfers Paradise Alliance not to attend. Both of those entities are council entities.

Councillor Taylor has confirmed that he would not have a clue who said those things to those people. I have since got the impression from the member for Capalaba that he was satisfied with the answers that Councillor Taylor gave—that he believed Councillor Taylor. I was absolutely gobsmacked to read the member for Ferny Grove’s personal contribution to the report, the chair’s foreword, and the absolutely disgusting attack on Councillor Taylor, the mayor, Tom Tate, and the Gold Coast City Council.

Here is a member who constantly tells anyone who will listen of his experience in committees when he was a senator. How many times have we heard that? Without referring to the correspondence—or that is what he would have us believe—he has made an all-out attack on Councillor Taylor in particular. The chair’s foreword states—

Government committee members are very concerned over matters related to evidence and events arising from the committee’s public hearing on the Gold Coast on 4 October 2016 of the Bill.

Really? Government members? Not from the impression that I got after a meeting recently in this House with the other committee members. The chair’s foreword goes on to state—

In the lead up to the hearing several Gold Coast witnesses decided to withdraw their attendance from such hearing. During the hearing the Member for Capalaba questioned Cr Paul Taylor whether he had made contact with the Broadbeach Alliance and the Surfers Paradise Alliance to not provide evidence at the hearing on 4 October. Cr Taylor responded ‘No, I did not. I am also on the board of Broadbeach Alliance.’

The chair’s foreword continues to state—

Government members—

there it is again—

remain cynical on whether Cr Taylor had any role in these witnesses decision to not attend.

The chair’s foreword goes on to state that Councillor Taylor tabled a misleading letter from the mayor. Just a while ago the member quoted from the misleading letter from the mayor! It is amazing! The mayor has since refuted everything that the chair has said and referenced many media articles with dates and times, as I understand it, that confirm the mayor’s position.

The chair’s foreword goes on to criticise Councillor Taylor for not reading the 625 pages of the bill and the explanatory notes. Not only does he make these accusations in his chair’s foreword, he continues—

Ms Pease: This is a disgrace.

Mr CRANDON: It is a disgrace. I take that interjection. The member continues to use the words ‘government members’ thus implicating the member for Capalaba and the member for Lytton in his tirade. I have been told they had no input into that foreword.

My point is this: the member for Ferny Grove, the esteemed ex-senator, failed in his duty as chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. He failed the committee in that he did not check his facts. He did not insist on seeing the evidence. He did not pick up the phone whilst he was writing his chair's foreword to ask for the emails and file notes to confirm what he was writing. He has brought embarrassment upon himself and, at the very least, the government members by implicating them in his blatant attempt to discredit Councillor Taylor by calling Councillor Taylor's good name into doubt. I have the evidence that the chair chose not to seek out—and I table copies—

Mr RYAN: I rise to a point of order. I have been listening to the member for Coomera. He seems to be making some pretty significant allegations against the member for Ferny Grove. This is not the place or the time for those allegations to be made. The proper process—

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Millar): Order! Member for Coomera, that is unparliamentary. I would ask you to withdraw.

Mr CRANDON: I withdraw.

Mr RYAN: The proper way for those allegations to be made is by writing to the Speaker for his consideration as to whether those matters need to be referred to the Ethics Committee. This is a debate about the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill.

Mr WALKER: I rise to a point of order. The points that the member is making, while they go to the way in which the chair has acted as chair of the committee, also go to the weight that can be placed upon evidence given to the committee. The weight that can be placed on evidence given to the committee is a relevant matter for this chamber as it debates the bill. The member should be allowed to raise those matters

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Millar): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr CRANDON: As I said, I have the evidence that the chair chose not to seek out. I table copies for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Email correspondence, dated October 2016, regarding the attendance of the Surfers Paradise Alliance Limited at the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee's public hearing on the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill [2053].

The first document is from the Surfers Paradise Alliance. In an email to me, CEO Mike Winlow says—

Hi Michael

Please see email trail below with respect to correspondence with Greg Thomson.

My initial discussion with Greg Thomson regarding Surfers Paradise Alliance attendance at the hearing was undertaken without the knowledge that Cr Taylor would be presenting on behalf of the City of Gold Coast.

On receiving the program from Greg Thomson, I became aware of his attendance and post discussion with the Chair of the Surfers Paradise Alliance Board I advised Greg Thomson within 15 minutes of receiving his email that there would be no need to present formally or separately as an organisation.

I can categorically say that there was no discussion regarding attendance at the hearing with Cr Taylor either directly or indirectly and that our decision not to proceed was ours alone.

In an email to Greg Thomson on Friday, 30 September, he said—

Hi Greg

Apologies for late notice however Cr Taylor City of Gold Coast will address matters relevant to the Alliance and therefore we will not be needing to present formally or separately as an organisation.

I table a second email.

Tabled paper: Email correspondence, dated November 2016, regarding the attendance of the Broadbeach Alliance at the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee's public hearing on the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill [2054].

This second document is from Jan McCormick, the CEO of the Broadbeach Alliance. In an email to me Jan says—

Good morning Michael

Attached is the email you referred to. I mention in this email that I sought advice from council not councillor/s, which I did. I called the CEO's office and after discussion with them it was felt that this was an issue for the Mayor and the divisional councillors, it was in fact not our role as entities of the city to comment on such issues.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. The member for Coomera has continued to make a case and build a story that is not pertaining to the issues that are before the House in relation to the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill. The matters that he continues to raise relate

to the conduct and operation of the committee. Mr Deputy Speaker, I encourage you to seek guidance and consider whether you might call the member for Coomera back to the substance of the bill and that, if he has concern about the operation of the committee and the activities of the committee in the consideration of the bill, which is a different matter, he would be aware of the appropriate processes and places in which he can raise these matters.

Mr WALKER: I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the House has just regurgitated the same point that you had raised before you a couple of minutes ago. The point is that this House has to assess the evidence given to the committee as it assesses this bill. The relevance of the matters raised by the member for Coomera is that the chair of the committee effectively cast doubt on the evidence given by Councillor Taylor and the letter submitted by Mayor Tate. The question of whether that was the right action or wrong is not what the member is raising. The member is raising evidence that allows this House to rely on the letter and the sentiments expressed by Mayor Tate and Councillor Taylor. It is extremely relevant to the committee's report and the weight that this House gives it.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Mansfield. Keeping in mind that the member for Coomera is talking about the committee report in regard to the bill, I will ask the member to also keep to the bill, but understand that he is talking about the committee report.

Mr CRANDON: The second document is from Jan McCormick, the CEO of the Broadbeach Alliance. In an email to me Jan says—

Good morning Michael

Attached is the email you referred to. I mention in this email that I sought advice from council not councillor/s, which I did. I called the CEO's office and after discussion with them it was felt that this was an issue for the Mayor and the divisional councillors, it was in fact not our role as entities of the city to comment on such issues.

In discussion with state government officers I re-iterated these comments and told them I felt, as I had no real contribution to these issues in the precinct, I was not able to comment and that the mayor was the person who should comment.

I was not aware Cr Paul Taylor was attending the hearings until one of the state government staff mentioned it and I did not discuss in any way the issues of the hearing with Cr Taylor prior to his attendance, and he absolutely did not sway my decision to attend as was stated in Parliament.

In an email to Greg Thomson she said—

Good afternoon Gregory

I have been advised by council that it is not appropriate that I attend the panel on Tuesday, please accept my apologies.

Remember, Jan also clarifies why she was not attending verbally as noted in her email to me. Today is 10 November. The report was tabled on 1 November. What has occurred in the meantime? We have seen the *Bully Boy* article on the front page of the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. I table that for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Media article, undated, titled 'Labor MP Weak on bikies, tough on anti-gangs councillor, Bully Boy, Bikie law brawl erupts' [\[2055\]](#).

We have seen quite a bit of media on the Gold Coast. Following on from the first story in the *Bulletin* that calls the member for Ferny Grove a bully, we have these accusations, and the *Gold Coast Bulletin* then asked the Premier if she supported the member. The Premier has declined to answer. What does this tell us? Surely if she supported him she would say so. To recap, the chair of the committee has gone off and written his foreword. He has implicated his government colleagues. He has completely ignored the evidence that was there if he bothered to get it. This he has done in a deliberate attempt to disparage the name of Councillor Paul Taylor in particular, as well as Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate, to throw their evidence out as though it meant nothing, and then he has the audacity to come into this House and use quotes from that same evidence, having already put in the foreword that he did not believe the evidence. It is absolutely disgraceful. This has been done in a deliberate attempt to disparage both of those people.

We heard nothing from the member until today. How many sentences did he use to apologise to Paul Taylor? It was two, I think. He said nothing about the Gold Coast City Council, he said nothing about Tom Tate and he said a couple of weak words of apology to Paul Taylor. There was no direct apology or apology in the media. He waited 10 days to say something. Frankly, it is too little too late. As such, I call on the Premier, based on the evidence before us, to sack the chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order.

Mr CRANDON: The Premier forced a minister to resign for being dishonest.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Millar): Order! Member for Coomera, I have a point of order.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I was respecting your ruling that the member for Coomera was speaking, in effect, to the bill by speaking about the committee report. We are now going well beyond speaking about the committee report. The member for Coomera is making all sorts of reflections on fellow members and is certainly going well beyond the contention that you had in your ruling that by discussing the report and the committee process in relation to a particular report that he would be addressing the subject of the bill. He is now effectively disparaging a fellow member of a committee.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Debate on the second reading may address principles of the bill, the portfolio committee's examination and report of any amendments recommended by the committee. I call the member for Coomera. There is no point of order.

Mr CRANDON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Frankly, it is too little too late in my view and I am calling on the Premier to sack the chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. She forced a minister to resign last week for being dishonest. By his own admission, the chair of the committee has been dishonest in dealing with this matter. I put it to members that it is quite reasonable to assume that he chose not to see the evidence for his own interest. Had he seen the evidence he would have been unable to write what he did. He has withdrawn that in many ways here today. He so wanted to write it, I am sure. Sack him, Premier, or force him to resign for being dishonest in the way he did this and for bringing the committee system into disrepute. How can witnesses ever trust him again? How can witnesses ever trust our committee system when they know that the chair of the committee can at the very least be tardy in checking his facts and at worst be dishonest in the way he deals with the evidence before us? That foreword is the worst example of abuse of process I have seen in our committee system in the more than seven years I have been a member of this place. We, through the Premier, need to send a clear message to the people of Queensland that this sort of abuse will not be tolerated. Remove the chair from his role.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr CRANDON: I take that interjection. They do not like the truth. He had to back down today. Go back and read the transcript. He had to back down in the committee hearings as well. Through the Premier we need to send a clear message.

In relation to the bill before the House, as has already been suggested by the shadow Attorney-General, there is very little that we on this side of the House support in the bill. If those aspects that we do support were brought to the House in a stand-alone bill we would be in agreement. As there are so many aspects of this bill that water down and/or dismantle the current legislation, we on this side of the House do not support its passing. The summary of the 10-page non-government members' statement of reservation—

Mrs Stuckey: I bet none of them read it.

Mr CRANDON: Yes, none of those would have bothered. It is worthwhile all members reading it to find out the flaws in this 450 pages. It makes a lot of sense. I table the non-government members' statement of reservation for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Non-Government Members Statement of Reservation' [2056].

I thank the secretariat. They had a massive job with these three pieces of legislation on top of one another. Sometimes, sadly, we missed a few relevant points. I understand the pressure they were under and I do, from the bottom of my heart, thank them for what they did. I also thank Paul Taylor in particular and all of those other people who took the time to come along and either provide us with technical witness statements or their views having lived in the area for many years, as has Paul Taylor, the local councillor. He knows what is going on here. The member for Ferny Grove has obviously not been down there. He is too far away from the action to know what is really going on on the Gold Coast with these bikies.