




Speech By
Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 21 August 2018

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DISSOLUTION OF IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL) BILL

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (4.44 pm): What a mess! What a mess the Labor Party has got into with the Ipswich City Council. There is no doubt that the community of Ipswich knows that this is the Labor Party's mess. As I said this morning, this is the fourth attempt by the minister to fix this. In parliament one or two sittings ago, he said that his solution was the last legislation that we passed. Of course, then they went to the Supreme Court and now he is circumventing the Supreme Court. We know that at estimates the minister got into all sorts of trouble when the CCC chair, Mr Alan MacSporran, was asked directly by the shadow Attorney-General, 'Mr MacSporran, did you tell the minister to do this?' and Mr MacSporran clearly said, 'No.' There have been different propositions from this minister as we have gone along.

Once I have read from these documents I will table them. I will table a letter that I wrote to the CCC Chair, Mr Alan MacSporran, on 15 May 2018. I wrote—

I am writing about your ongoing investigation into allegations of corruption at the Ipswich City Council.

On Wednesday 2 May 2018, I was a witness to a conversation between Jo-Ann Miller MP, Member for Bundamba and Hon Stirling Hinchliffe MP, Minister for Local Government. Other Members and staff were also in the vicinity. The conversation was in relation to the ongoing investigation into Ipswich City Council. The conversation occurred in an anteroom behind the Legislative Assembly chamber at about 6:15pm.

Ms Miller raised with Mr Hinchliffe the proposition that she was entitled to an apology for her complaints about former Ipswich Mayor Paul Pisasale being disregarded by the Premier and the Palaszczuk Government.

During the conversation, Ms Miller said on multiple occasions that over a period of years complaints about Mr Pisasale's conduct, had been put to the Premier and to the Administrative Committee of the Labor Party.

I am concerned by what I heard. I am concerned firstly that evidence relevant to your ongoing investigation may be being withheld by the Labor Party. I am also concerned, in light of the cavalier nature of the dismissals by the Premier to Ms Miller's earlier complaints that the evidence may be at risk of destruction.

Further on the evening of 13 May 2018, Ms Miller advised me, in the presence of others, that the Premier would have you believe that Ms Miller only made complaints about Ipswich in opposition. Ms Miller advised me that this was not the case and she directly told the Premier about the alleged corruption in both opposition and government.

I asked the CCC to investigate those scenarios. I table a copy of that letter dated 15 May 2018.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 15 May 2018, from the member for Kawana, Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, to the Chairman, Crime and Corruption Commission, Mr Alan MacSporran QC, regarding allegations of corruption at Ipswich City Council and the conduct of the Premier [[1153](#)].

In response, the CCC wrote back to me on 16 July, some two months after I wrote the complaint. They wrote—

Thank you for your letter to the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) dated 15 May 2018, in which you raised concerns about the actions of the Premier of Queensland, Ms Anastasia Palaszczuk MP.

We understand that on 2 May 2018 you overheard a conversation between Ms Jo-Ann Miller MP, and the Minister for Local Government, Mr Stirling Hinchliffe MP. You provide that the conversation concerned the ongoing investigation of the Ipswich City Council. Ms Miller was suggesting that she was owed an apology for complaints she had previously made about Mr Pisasale that had been disregarded by the Premier and the Government. She apparently referred to making complaints about Mr Pisasale's conduct to the Premier on multiple occasions.

This conversation caused you to become concerned that evidence relevant to the CCC's investigation of the Ipswich City Council, was being withheld by the Government. Further, that relevant evidence may be at risk of destruction.

The CCC notes that you could not identify any specific incidents and your complaint appears to be based on possibilities raised by the conversation you overheard.

As you are aware, under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* (the Act), the CCC's role is to ensure that complaints involving suspected 'corruption' on the part of Queensland's elected officials are dealt with appropriately.

Before the CCC may take action in relation to a complaint of corruption, we must be satisfied that the information available to us raises a suspicion that corruption has occurred. Taking action in the absence of a suspicion would be an unjustifiable use of the CCC's limited resources.

The Act recognises that it is appropriate for us to take no further action on a complaint in those circumstances.

While the matters you have raised, as outlined above would, if proved, amount to corrupt conduct, the CCC considers you have not provided any evidence to raise a suspicion that the elements of section 15 of the Act are satisfied.

For those reasons the CCC is unable to take any further action in relation to your concerns.

I now table that letter from the CCC, dated 16 July 2018, eight weeks after I sent a complaint to the CCC about conversations.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 16 July 2018, from the Acting Director, Integrity Services, Crime and Corruption Commission, Ms Elizabeth Foulger, to the member for Kawana, Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP regarding concerns about the conduct of the Premier [\[1154\]](#).

It took the CCC eight weeks to come back to me and say, 'You can't provide any evidence of corruption in the Labor Party and the administrative committee of the Labor Party.' I never said I had it. I said that the member for Bundamba had it, but the CCC never asked the member for Bundamba about the allegations. The CCC never went to the Premier and asked, 'Is the member for Bundamba telling the truth?' The CCC said because of its 'limited resources' it did not investigate it. I think it is negligent of the CCC not to investigate the complaint.

How did it take eight weeks for the CCC to come up with something that says, 'Member for Kawana, you did not provide any evidence'? I never said I had the evidence. What I said was that I overheard a conversation with the member for Bundamba saying that she was owed an apology because she had warned the Premier in opposition and in government about the corruption in Ipswich. The CCC never lifted a finger and made a phone call to the member for Bundamba and asked, 'Is this true?' They never went to the Premier. They never put the Premier in the star chamber and asked, 'Is this true?' They simply dismissed the allegations that I raised.

I think it should be of concern to all Queenslanders that the CCC did not take seriously enough this issue when we had a member of parliament elected some 15 or 20 years ago, as the member for Bundamba was, alleging that she had told the Premier in opposition and in government about corruption in Ipswich. The CCC never picked up the phone to Labor head office to ask if this was true, never picked up the phone to the Premier, the Deputy Premier or Minister Hinchliffe and asked, 'Are these allegations true?' They said that the member for Kawana could not produce the evidence.

I am not the member for Bundamba. The only person who knows the truth in this is the member for Bundamba, the Premier—the member for Inala—and the Deputy Premier of this state. The CCC should review the complaint that I made, pick up the phone to the member for Bundamba and the Premier and find out who was telling the truth.