




Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 November 2018

**CRIME AND CORRUPTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (12.00 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Crime and Corruption and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I am pleased to support this bill, which delivers on the Palaszczuk government's election commitment to restore the independence and strength of the Crime and Corruption Commission and to ensure high standards of integrity throughout all levels of government.

This bill will deliver on two core objectives that will help build robust systems of integrity and accountability in Queensland's public institutions. First, the bill will expand the definition of 'corrupt conduct' to capture private citizens' conduct that impairs or could impair public confidence in public administration. This acknowledges that a greater degree of government services and projects are now being outsourced to the private sector. This outsourcing has led to the potential for private citizens who deliver government services to engage in corrupt conduct. The commission's primary responsibility to Queenslanders is that it promote public confidence in the integrity of our public sector. It is crucial then that the commission sets high standards of integrity and accountability and that these standards are maintained when government services are outsourced to private entities.

Corruption, or even conduct that puts integrity at risk, not only weakens the community's confidence in the Queensland Public Service but also lowers people's overall trust in our government. If we want to strengthen public confidence then accountability and integrity should not stop at the point where government services are outsourced. We expect the private sector to be held to equally high standards of integrity and accountability, as are government departments.

The bill also expands the commission's investigative jurisdiction to allow the commission to investigate conduct that is liable to allow, encourage or cause corrupt conduct to occur or even conduct that is connected with corrupt conduct. Broadening the investigative jurisdiction will ensure that the CCC has full capacity to investigate corrupt conduct that may have happened in the past, may be happening now or may happen in the future. It puts the CCC on a proactive footing to address corruption risks and reduces opportunities and incentives for individuals and organisations to engage in corrupt conduct.

To assist units of public administration in interpreting the definition of 'corrupt conduct', the bill simplifies the definition by removing the requirement that conduct is carried out for the benefit of or detriment to a person. The bill also omits the list of offences in section 15(2), which are not conclusive of corrupt conduct but could constitute that.

The bill's second core objective implements recommendations of the CCC reports titled *Review of the Crime and Corruption Commission* and the *Report on a complaint by Mr Darren Hall*. I give my full support to the amendments in this bill because, as members are aware and as we have heard from other members in this House, my electorate of Ipswich has seen public confidence in local government severely undermined by the actions of certain councillors and council officers who tolerated and enabled a culture of governance failure to flourish for far too long.

The CCC's investigation of the Ipswich City Council, otherwise known as Operation Windage, uncovered a vast array of improper behaviour and activities, such as inappropriate relationships between council and the private sector, failure to report suspicions of corruption by council executives, breaches of council policy and evidence of serious criminal offences, including official corruption. The investigation led to multiple criminal charges and resignations, and it was amplified by sustained negative media coverage lasting several months. This consequently led to a serious degradation in the community's trust and confidence in their local council—something which is only now being restored with the installation of the interim administrator, Greg Chemello.

If the CCC is given wider jurisdiction to investigate conduct that is likely to allow, encourage or cause corruption, as this bill provides, then we should see less of the major endemic corruption that was uncovered by Operation Windage. This will allow the CCC to remove the rot before it corrupts the wider system of our public administration. It may result in more people likely coming forward to report to the CCC any behaviour and activities that they believe undermine the good governance and integrity of our public sector.

In March this year the CCC advised the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee that they supported the amendments in this bill because, in order for them to be an effective anti-corruption agency, they should have the ability to examine the corruption risks that, while not the subject of a specific claim, nevertheless warrant examination. Anything that upholds integrity and accountability in our public administration and prevents the undermining of trust and confidence in all levels of government is to be applauded. I commend this bill to the House.