




Speech By
Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 12 February 2019

MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Member for Whitsunday; CFMMEU

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (2.34 pm): The people of Whitsunday deserve to know what their member has been up to. Recently in January, he arranged to stay with an elderly couple—they are over 80 years of age—on a remote farm interstate. He arrived late, at 1.30 in the morning, after phoning the couple at around 10 pm. They had encouraged him not to come in but to stay at a motel because it was late. The next morning, the hosts departed at around seven o'clock and, from the discussion with him when he arrived, they assumed that he would leave early in the morning rather than linger.

Just after midday, their 18-year-old granddaughter arrived to collect some of her belongings following a short holiday after graduating from high school weeks before. When she arrived at the property, she did not know that he was there. She did not know who he was or why he was in her grandparents' home.

He met her in the living room before following her into the bedroom. He was half naked, having just had a shower. He closed the door behind her when they entered the room. He touched her on the back and stroked her hair. She did not ask him or invite him to touch her.

He told her she was pretty. He told her he liked young girls. He told her she should come to the Whitsundays to visit him and he would pay for her flights. He pressured her into taking selfies with him. It was an intimidating and frightening experience for her—a large 47-year-old man alone on a remote property with such a smaller and very young woman. She panicked.

She frantically gathered her belongings to get out as quickly as possible. In her rush, a piece of her underwear fell to the ground. He picked up the fallen underwear. He turned it over in his hands and told her he liked it. She grabbed her things and got out. His presence, demeanour and conduct were very scary and intimidating. She had a panic alarm in her handbag that she considered using, but did not because she knew that she was outside of mobile coverage. In the initial complaint from the mother of the young woman, she said that she feared she would be raped on the remote property by the member for Whitsunday. It was a traumatic experience for the young woman.

The people of Whitsunday need to know that their member is all selfie and no action. He loves grandstanding on the issues—for instance, the Goorganga Plains, and carping and moaning about road funding—but the truth is that when down here at parliament never once has he been to a party room policy committee meeting to talk about getting the proposal delivered. He is a lazy member who always talks but never listens. The LNP has tried to help him with policy support and advice, but he could never be bothered to sit at the table and talk about a plan.

Since he was expelled from the LNP, numerous other complaints have come to light. Another young woman has made a formal complaint of harassment of a sexual nature and stalking to the LNP about the member.

Another woman has come forward to say she witnessed the member sexually assault her friend at a music festival. She described him walking through a crowd. She saw the member look at her friend. She thinks he targeted her because he knew she had recently separated from her husband. He approached her from behind and rubbed himself against her. She wheeled around and told him to go away. Another woman has now come forward to say that she has screenshots of SMS messages the member sent to a then 16-year-old girl—messages that contained sexually explicit material and sexually suggestive lines about how she made him feel.

Recently, another woman told us of his leering and staring at a 17-year-old waitress to the point that she hid whenever he entered the cafe. The cafe manager intervened to protect the 17-year-old waitress from the unwanted attention of the member from Whitsunday. The young woman in the first complaint was so scared by the conduct of the member for Whitsunday that she has made a complaint to the police. The member does not meet the high standards of the LNP and the LNP leader. The people of Whitsunday deserve much better.

On a separate matter, I will talk about a matter that I have referred to in this place before, which involves the company Enco Precast, which is a precast company. Helen Burgess works in the IR department. She has been bullying the company Enco on behalf of the CFMMEU. I have referred the matter to the Crime and Corruption Commission. The Crime and Corruption Commission has written back to me, saying that the matter could be investigated by the Ethical Standards Committee. Helen Burgess came to a Sunshine Coast building site with 10 minutes notice. That is how long it took her—

Ms FARMER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member for Kawana is making some very serious allegations about the member for Whitsunday. I would like to know when the LNP became aware of the matters that he is raising now. When did the LNP know that this was occurring?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Pugh): Thank you, Minister. I have noted your point of order. I will allow the member to continue. I will ask him to be very careful about the language that he uses around imputations.

Mr BLEIJIE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am raising a matter about a public servant. That is what parliament is for. I am talking about a public servant. That is what parliament is for.

Ms Jones interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, I have given my ruling. I have asked the member to be careful about the language used. I ask the member to finish his speech.

Mr BLEIJIE: I am convinced there is a deliberate, coercive attempt by Helen Burgess in the industrial relations department to bully the business Enco on behalf of the CFMMEU. She turned up to a Sunshine Coast construction site. It took her 10 minutes to get from Brisbane to the Sunshine Coast after receiving a complaint or a phone call from the CFMMEU. It took her 10 minutes to get from Brisbane to the Sunshine Coast.

This should be thoroughly investigated by the ethical standards branch of the industrial relations department because I believe there is coercion and a deliberate attempt by the CFMMEU to infiltrate the industrial relations department of the Labor government.

(Time expired)