




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 17 March 2022

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (3.40 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee's report titled *Inquiry into the Crime and Corruption Commission's investigation of former councillors of the Logan City Council; and related matters*. I want to thank the chair of the parliamentary committee, the member for Scenic Rim, for the work he and his committee members have done to bring this report forward. I have no doubt it will have an important place in history; it certainly already has in local government history.

The inquiry was into the inappropriate intervention in a local government employment matter by the dismissal of the Logan City Council chief executive officer and the inappropriate laying of fraud charges against the local government councillors. That has now been well explored by this report. It is disappointing that this Labor government had to have their agencies and the behaviour of these agencies brought to the attention of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee via a significant complaint from the Local Government Association of Queensland. It says a lot about the incompetence of the state Labor government and the then minister for local government.

I said in the House—

It is important to place on the record that the situation that has occurred at Logan is somewhat different to the earlier situation we saw at Ipswich and it is not as a result of systemic corruption.

This report clearly shows the dismissal at Logan exposed the failure of the impartiality, the independence, the fairness and the regard to the public interest when it came to the conduct of the Crime and Corruption Commission in this matter. I do believe that there should be an impartial and independent watchdog for public sector corruption and major crime. I also believe that the local government sector want to have confidence in the CCC in carrying out this role. The CCC should fulfil that function. However, they should do so with fairness and objectivity within the legislation that governs them. It is up to the current state Labor government to make sure that this happens on their watch.

This report is about the Logan matter. However, to quote the chair, the findings and recommendations of the committee should be seen as a starting point to ensuring that the events about which the committee makes serious findings are never repeated. Unfortunately, it is not only the Logan councillors who have had their reputations and livelihoods ruined. Alf Lacey, the former mayor of Palm Island, was charged in 2020 by the Crime and Corruption Commission in a fraud case which was dismissed by the magistrate in November 2021 due to lack of evidence. Andrew Antoniolli, former mayor of the Ipswich City Council, was charged in 2019 by the CCC. That case was dismissed in November 2021. Edric Walden, former mayor of Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council, was charged in 2016 with misconduct of public office and forgery. Those charges were dropped in September 2020.

In December 2019 Allan Sutherland, former mayor of Moreton Bay Regional Council, was charged by the CCC. Those charges were dropped in January 2020. Bob Manning, Mayor of Cairns and, as I read recently, Councillor Adrian Raedel also had their charges dropped. There are many more.

Alison Smith from the Local Government Association of Queensland said that her organisation knew of 15 matters that were brought before the court by the CCC and had been cleared in the last 12 months. This report was needed. The cultural change is needed even more.

There has been an inappropriate pursuit of local government elected members and this has happened at a time when the government has its own integrity crisis. When we look at the integrity crisis of this Labor government, the issues surrounding the Integrity Commissioner and the State Archivist, complaints regarding doctored annual reports, the Legal Services Commissioner's complaints and the complaints from ministerial staff, it is pretty clear where the integrity cancer lies, and that is with the state Labor government.