




Speech By
Jonty Bush

MEMBER FOR COOPER

Record of Proceedings, 17 March 2022

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (3.37 pm): I rise to speak on report No. 108, titled *Inquiry into the Crime and Corruption Commission's investigation of former councillors of Logan City Council; and related matters*. This report and the inquiry which informed the report was managed by the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee of which I am now a very proud member.

The genesis of the report was a complaint referred to the committee by the LGAQ on 5 May 2021. The nature of that complaint is publicly available. Broadly, it raised concerns with the manner in which the CCC investigated allegations of corruption within Logan City Council.

On 28 May 2021, the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee resolved to investigate the issues raised by the LGAQ in its correspondence to the committee and to publicly inquire into and report on the CCC's investigation of former councillors of Logan City Council which led to the former councillors being charged with fraud; to report on the decision and considerations of the CCC to charge these former councillors; the evidence and submissions and other relevant documentation provided to the Office of Director of Public Prosecutions by the CCC in support of those charges; the communications from the ODPP to the CCC with respect to the charges; the CCC's involvement in related civil matters including those which were brought before the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission and the Queensland Industrial Court, including the CCC's interaction with former councillors, the former CEO of Logan City Council and any other relevant Logan City Council officers at relevant times; the CCC's use of coercive powers and matters relating to the dissemination of information obtained under coercion to parties in non-criminal proceedings; the process by which the CCC considers and determines whether to refer matters to the DPP; the CCC's interaction with the DPP more broadly; and any other related matters.

The committee called for submissions and held public hearings over 10 days. Witnesses included officers from the CCC, former councillors, the Director of Public Prosecutions and the former interim administrator of Logan City Council.

The committee also served a summons on the CCC requiring the production of material relevant to the inquiry's terms of reference. The committee was assisted, as others have stated, during the inquiry by two independent legal counsel, Dr Jonathan Horton QC and Mr Ben McMillan, who were engaged to act as counsel assisting. I am sure we would all agree they were phenomenal in their approach. It is the appropriate place to acknowledge and thank them both for their work on what was a very complex inquiry and their level of technical expertise and the independence that they brought to the process was very much valued.

The report outlines quite significant findings about the CCC and its actions. The committee came to 14 findings and made six recommendations that we believe will collectively help to clarify the CCC's role in the investigation of major crime and corruption including its role in civil proceedings within the QIRC. The findings and recommendations were made on a bipartisan basis, and I would like to thank

and acknowledge the other committee members. In particular I speak of the chair, the member for Scenic Rim; and the deputy chair, the member for Stafford; as well as all other committee members who engaged in a very thoughtful and cooperative manner.

Queensland needs an effective, impartial and independent watchdog on public sector corruption and major crime. Queenslanders must have confidence in the CCC and its use of the extraordinary powers that have been entrusted to it, in particular, that these powers will be used impartially, independently, fairly and with regard to the public interest at all times and in all places. This inquiry was about the Logan matter. However, the findings and recommendations of the committee will have a general and positive impact on the Crime and Corruption Commission framework within Queensland.

I conclude by thanking the committee secretariat and those seconded to it during this inquiry for their work. I would also like to acknowledge the former parliamentary commissioner, Karen Carmody, who was involved initially in the process, and the current Parliamentary Commissioner, Michael Woodford, who concluded the process with us. I would like to thank Hansard and the Parliamentary Service's team for their assistance over the 10 days of public hearings. I commend the report to the House.