



Speech By  
**Tim Nicholls**


**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

---

Record of Proceedings, 12 September 2023

## **MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

### **Palaszczuk Labor Government, Integrity**

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (2.21 pm): I want to raise an important issue. It is an important issue for integrity in government, especially for the Palaszczuk Labor government. As we all know and as Queenslanders are finding out, their integrity record is shameful and has been burnt and tarnished. It is also important for the parliamentary privilege of this place. Tomorrow in the High Court it is judgement day. It is judgement day in the matter of Carne and the CCC, and it is judgement day as a result in relation to the matter of Trad and the CCC.

Let us remember the background. Peter Carne—a Labor mate appointed by the former and now recycled Labor Attorney-General to the position of Public Trustee—was subject to a CCC investigation as a result of whistleblower complaints. That investigation was completed by the CCC and resulted in a show cause notice being issued to Mr Carne. Mr Carne then stayed in office for almost a year and received almost a year's worth of salary. The allegations included unauthorised travel, unauthorised education expenses and allegations of drunkenness at work, being absent without leave, bullying and conflicts of interest.

Let us talk about the Trad matter—a matter so sensitive that a Supreme Court order was made preventing the existence of the investigation itself being disclosed. That investigation was into the circumstances surrounding the appointment of probably the second highest public servant in the state of Queensland—that is, the Under Treasurer of the state of Queensland. These are two major CCC investigations into Labor luminaries, both of whom are so afraid of the antiseptic power of the sunlight that they have remarkably tried to stop the publication in this House of the reports of the independent Crime and Corruption Commission watchdog into those matters.

Let us not forget that Ms Trad's legal fees are being met by the taxpayers. Despite relentless questioning of the now health minister when she was attorney-general, Queenslanders are no clearer on how much is being paid to Ms Trad's lawyers to take this action. We do know that over half a million dollars has been spent in taking this matter to the High Court to prosecute the CCC's claim in terms of making sure that the sunlight gets in. We know what the chair of the CCC, Mr Barbour, says: 'The CCC and its predecessors have regularly reported on the outcomes of and lessons learned from corruption investigations.' Clearly, there are very significant ramifications from this court case.

The purpose of these reports that have been tabled in here as a matter of practice, procedure and regularity in the past is to raise the standard of integrity and conduct in units of public administration. Let us take some of those reports—the fake Tahitian prince; the Palm Island inquiries; the misconduct at the University of Queensland; the transparency in local government, including Paul Pisasale and the Ipswich City Council; the investigation into the Premier's former chief of staff, David Barbagallo; the investigation into Merri Rose back in the day; the investigation into Gordon Nuttall back in the day; and the investigation into the mangocube affair back in the day.

These are all matters where the CCC have provided reports that have served to improve integrity in this state. These are now two matters where two Labor luminaries—one of whom was a former deputy premier and former member of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee, I might say—have sought to stifle the reporting and have sought to block investigation. Two outcomes seem possible: either the CCC will prevail in the High Court and the practice that has been accepted and adopted in this place over many years will be confirmed and Queenslanders will see what happened in those two very significant matters, or in fact that will not be the decision and there will be some variation and we will see integrity in Queensland take another blow under the Palaszczuk Labor government.

The Palaszczuk Labor government have been remarkably quiet in all of this. They have not come out and said, 'We will fix this.' In fact, when asked directly in estimates about it, they refused to say whether they would amend the legislation to allow these reports to be made public. Will this government act to maintain integrity in this state or will they be complicit in the cover-up? Will the integrity inferno engulfing this government continue? Will the chaos and crisis distract them? Tomorrow is truly Labor's judgement day in Queensland.