




Speech By
Sandy Bolton

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

Record of Proceedings, 20 August 2024

CRIME AND CORRUPTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (3.40 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution regarding this bill, which implements amendments to the Crime and Corruption Act emanating from a range of reports—and there seems to have been a lot of them—going back to 2016, and that was with the PCCC. This includes clarifying what special privileges are affected by the act such as legal professional privilege, establishing journalist shield laws and implementing a requirement for the Crime and Corruption Commission, the CCC, to seek the advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions on corruption offences arising from a corruption inquiry. This last provision was to address issues arising from the previous prosecution of several Logan City councillors which saw the CCC charge these councillors with fraud only to have the DPP later drop the charges due to insufficient evidence.

The bill still provides for exceptional circumstances where they do not have to consult with the DPP. This was queried by the Local Government Association of Queensland and the Queensland Law Society who stated that they could not identify any justification for the exemption. The department replied that it was designed for an emergency situation such as where an immediate arrest is essential and that they must subsequently still consult with the DPP as soon as practicable.

There were no submissions opposing the bill. However, as we have heard, the fact that it has not addressed key issues impacting the CCC doing its job is concerning. Some have requested certain provisions be changed, with the Law Society stating that the government should have waited until they could also address the CCC's reporting powers, which were the subject of a separate inquiry.

A statement of reservation raised the fixed seven-year appointment of the chairperson and commissioners that was previously set by the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee diminishing the required bipartisan approval. In addition, there is a request to reform the current definition of 'bipartisanship' for committee decisions, which is defined in the act as a majority not achieved solely with government members and, of course, could be achieved by crossbench members voting with government.

The argument is that these decisions are not bipartisan if they do not have the support of the opposition. It is often interesting to consider what is the crossbench because sometimes we are called opposition and other times not. It all gets very interesting. Having the opposition, this side of the House, on board with decisions is vital and, as we heard during the youth justice reform inquiry, this was a constant call on major issues from across Queensland, that to move forward we need that real bipartisan agreement. I think we all agree on that. However, any change should not have the effect of disenfranchising the crossbench vote, which is also vital. Maybe what we need is tripartisanship to deliver better outcomes for Queenslanders. Again, that is why we constantly request a review of committee and estimates processes. I have my fingers crossed that at the beginning of the next term that is exactly what will happen.

I want to thank the chair, the member for Toohey, as well as fellow committee members, our secretariat and all who made submissions and participated in the inquiry of this bill.