




Speech By
Adam Baillie

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Record of Proceedings, 29 April 2025

CRIME AND CORRUPTION (RESTORING REPORTING POWERS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BAILLIE** (Townsville—LNP) (5.30 pm): I rise today to speak to the Crime and Corruption (Restoring Reporting Powers) Amendment Bill 2025. This bill delivers a key election commitment of the Crisafulli government: to strengthen the reporting powers of the Crime and Corruption Commission, the CCC. Queensland's crime-fighting and anti-corruption bodies began with the landmark Fitzgerald inquiry of the late 1980s. Since 1989 there has been a constant commitment from a series of organisations to fight corruption and major crime in Queensland. The Crime and Corruption Commission came into being on 1 July 2014 with the introduction of the Crime and Corruption Act 2001.

This bill will restore the openness, transparency and accountability that Queenslanders expect and deserve from their government and will go towards restoring trust—something that was sadly lost under the previous government. Trust was lost after the previous government, among other actions, muzzled the CCC on multiple occasions—namely, during the Trad and Carne CCC investigations. Former deputy premier Jackie Trad was found to have aggressively and inappropriately interfered in an independent recruitment process to appoint her friend Frankie Carroll as Under Treasurer. Under the former Labor government, the contents of that CCC report were kept secret for several years, with hundreds of thousands of our taxpayer dollars being spent, and they would still be a secret today if the government had not changed.

Then we have the numerous allegations substantiated by the CCC relating to the former public trustee, Peter Carne. Those allegations included regularly being drunk at work, harassing office staff, keeping a breathalyser on his desk, misuse of the corporate credit card, getting staff to write his university assignments and creating a culture where staff were fearful of speaking up. The CCC has previously reported on and made public statements about its corruption investigations. A 2023 High Court decision in *Crime and Corruption Commission v Carne* found that the CCC did not have the legal power to publish the report on its investigation into the allegations of corrupt conduct and maladministration. This decision struck at the heart of open government and transparency. It meant that Queensland's anti-corruption body, charged with upholding integrity, was effectively silenced when it came to informing the public. The very body designed to shine a light on corruption could no longer speak to the people it served.

Corruption, or even the perception of it, erodes the public's faith in government. When corruption happens in silence it spreads, because no-one is being held to account. Queenslanders deserve to know when people in positions of power misuse that power. The two cases I referenced earlier raised many questions, including: how could the public never see the details, why was no statement issued and why was no clarity provided? However, the issue is not whether we have answers to those questions but the fact we need to ask those questions in the first place. The fact we have to ask those questions in the first place is dangerous in a democracy.

This bill restores the CCC's ability to publish reports about corruption matters, make public statements when it serves the public interest and help prevent future corruption through transparency. This is not done without appropriate checks and balances. This bill includes these clear safeguards: before naming anyone, the CCC must weigh the seriousness of the matter and the public benefit; individuals are given a fair chance to respond to any adverse comment; and privacy and wellbeing are considered carefully. It is a balanced approach, one that upholds the rights of individuals while protecting the integrity of public institutions.

This bill also validates past CCC reports that were cast into legal doubt by the High Court's decision. This provides certainty for the commission and for Queenslanders who rely on those reports to stay informed. It guarantees that the CCC can speak and be heard when it matters most. This bill restores integrity to the anti-corruption process. It brings to a close a dark chapter of Queensland's history—the Palaszczuk-Miles government's legacy of secrecy and cover-ups. This bill strengthens accountability, protects procedural fairness and, most importantly, ensures Queenslanders are not left in the dark when it comes to how corruption is handled in their government.

Before I close, I would like to acknowledge the contribution from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Integrity as well as the contribution from the former shadow attorney-general and member for Clayfield. I also acknowledge the work of the committee and the committee chair which has resulted in such a comprehensive and fulsome report. I commend the bill to the House.