




Speech By
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CRIME AND CORRUPTION (RESTORING REPORTING POWERS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Miss DOOLAN** (Pumicestone—LNP) (6.18 pm): Today I rise to speak in support of one of the most important pieces of legislation this parliament will consider—the Crime and Corruption (Restoring Reporting Powers) Amendment Bill 2025. This bill marks a turning point for Queensland, a clear break from the culture of secrecy, cover-ups and political interference that thrived under the former Palaszczuk-Miles Labor government. It is about restoring the faith of Queenslanders in their public institutions, it is about rebuilding trust in the processes that are meant to protect the public from corruption and it is about making sure that never again can a government use its power to bury the truth.

This bill is a key election commitment of the Crisafulli government, and we are delivering. We promised Queenslanders that we would shine a light on corruption and restore transparency in our institutions. We promised Queenslanders that we would empower the Crime and Corruption Commission, the CCC, to once again speak freely to the people of this state. We promised Queenslanders that we would bring an end to the Labor legacy of dodging accountability. This bill keeps that promise.

The need for this legislation is clear. It comes after a dark chapter in Queensland's history—a chapter defined by cover-ups, legal gamesmanship and a blatant disregard for public trust. Let us not forget that under Labor the CCC's powers were neutered. When the High Court ruled in *Crime and Corruption Commission v Carne* that the CCC lacked the power to publish specific investigation reports, Labor had a choice: they could act swiftly to restore those powers and uphold transparency, but they did not. Instead, they dragged their feet. They allowed the CCC to go silent, unable to report publicly on corruption. For months Queenslanders were kept in the dark. That was no accident; it was a pattern of concealing the truth.

I remind the House of just what those opposite tried to hide. Let me remind Queenslanders why this bill is necessary. Firstly, I refer to the case of Jackie Trad. The CCC found that, while deputy premier, Ms Trad interfered inappropriately in the recruitment of former under treasurer Frankie Carroll. That was not just a case of political interference; it was aggressive lobbying and a deliberate undermining of an independent recruitment process. The panel tasked with assessing Mr Carroll's suitability, chaired by Dave Stewart, the director-general to the then premier herself, initially found Mr Carroll not appointable. But then, under pressure from Ms Trad, Mr Stewart changed his recommendation. He told the CCC—

The telephone conversations that I had with Trad were extremely aggressive ... she was extremely aggressive, very frustrated, and I have said to you that I was influenced by those conversations to change my view.

That is not how democracy should work. Our Public Service must be independent and it must be free from political interference, yet we saw a senior public servant bullied into changing his professional judgement.

Even former premier Anastacia Palaszczuk admitted to the CCC that Ms Trad pressured her. She described how Ms Trad first begged her to appoint Mr Carroll and later yelled at her, demanding that she pick up the pen and sign the appointment. When questioned by the CCC about those calls, Ms Trad denied ever yelling, but the evidence speaks for itself. This is not just about one appointment; this is about abuse of power at the highest levels of government. It is about a culture where political loyalty mattered more than merit, where backroom deals and aggressive lobbying replaced proper process and how those opposite fought to keep that hidden from the people of Queensland.

Let us turn to Peter Carne, the former public trustee. The CCC substantiated multiple allegations of misconduct, regular intoxication at work, harassment of staff, keeping a breathalyser on his desk—not to discourage drinking but because it became part of his daily routine—misusing his corporate credit card, getting staff to write his university assignments and creating a toxic culture of fear where staff were too afraid to speak out. Carne boasted about his connections to the highest levels of the Labor government and it is no surprise why. It was because under Labor those connections protected him.

Those cases reveal a government that was more concerned with protecting itself than serving the people and a government that used every tool at its disposal to suppress the truth. Queensland deserved better. This bill restores what Labor took away. It gives the CCC the clear unambiguous power to report publicly on corruption matters. It ensures no future government can silence the CCC as Labor did.

Key features of the bill include an explicit power for the CCC to report at any time on corruption matters; a power for the CCC to make public statements in any format that it deems appropriate; a new set of public interest criteria to guide those decisions, balancing the need for transparency with respect for individual rights; stronger procedural fairness protections for individuals named in reports, including clear timeframes and the right to review; the CCC's independence respected with the decision to table reports solely with the CCC and not the government of the day; and the validation of all past CCC reports and statements, ensuring legal certainty and access to historical records.

This bill makes it clear that the CCC is an independent watchdog, not a tool for political convenience. It reaffirms that, while the CCC can investigate and report, it does not make findings of corrupt conduct. That remains the role of the appropriate decision-making bodies. To those opposite who might try to defend their record, I say this: Queenslanders have seen the reports, they know the truth and they know that Labor fought to keep it from them.

This is a government that believes in the power of the people. We believe Queenslanders have the right to know what happens in their name and with their money under their laws. This bill is about respect: respect for our institutions, respect for our democracy and respect for the people. It is about ensuring that never again can a government hide behind legal technicalities to avoid being held accountable. It is about ensuring those who serve in public office, whether elected or appointed, do so with integrity.

With this bill, the Crisafulli government is turning the page. We are putting Queensland back on the path of honesty, transparency and accountability. We are standing up for the values that matter most to the people we serve. I commend the bill to the House.