




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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**CRIME AND CORRUPTION (RESTORING REPORTING POWERS) AMENDMENT
BILL**

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (8.36 pm): I rise to address the Crime and Corruption (Restoring Reporting Powers) Amendment Bill 2025. Introduced by the Queensland Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Integrity on 20 February 2025, the primary objectives of this legislation are to: firstly, restore the power of the Crime and Corruption Commission to report publicly about corruption investigations as it was considered to exist before the High Court decision in the *Crime and Corruption Commission v Carne* case, and to ensure that the Crime and Corruption Commission may also make public statements about these matters; secondly, safeguard against the release of information to the public about corruption matters in circumstances where the risks or harms outweigh any benefits to be derived from releasing the information; and, thirdly, ensure that any residual legal risk that might be attributable to the CCC and its officers in respect of the preparation and publication of past reports and statements is removed.

Following its introduction, this legislation was referred to the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee for detailed consideration, with the committee tabling its report on 11 April 2025 with just one recommendation: that the bill be passed. As articulated by the Attorney-General, the development of this legislation has fundamentally been informed by the decision of the High Court in the *Crime and Corruption Commission v Carne* case, which was at odds with the prevailing understanding at the time regarding the reporting powers of the Crime and Corruption Commission. This legislation represents not merely a legislative adjustment but a fundamental restoration of public trust—a commitment to the principles of transparency, accountability and integrity in public administration that must be the cornerstone of any government that truly seeks to serve its people. For almost a decade, these principles were systematically and repeatedly eroded under successive Labor state governments. Under Labor, the people of Queensland were denied the openness, and honesty, that they deserved. That is why, under the leadership of Premier David Crisafulli, the LNP state government is determined to right these wrongs and to return transparency and accountability to the heart of government here in Queensland.

This legislation delivers on a key election commitment by the Liberal National Party—a commitment made to every Queenslanders who demanded an end to the secrecy, the cover-ups and the protection rackets that characterised the Palaszczuk and Miles Labor state governments. Importantly, this legislation restores the reporting powers of the Crime and Corruption Commission—powers that were gravely undermined by the decision of the High Court of Australia in *Crime and Corruption Commission v Carne* case. Following that decision, the Crime and Corruption Commission was left unable to publicly report on corruption matters, effectively silencing an institution that was designed to be a fierce guardian against misconduct in public life.

Let there be no misunderstanding: following this decision by the High Court, Labor had ample opportunity to act. As we know, in 2023 the then Liberal National Party state opposition introduced legislation into the Queensland parliament in order to restore the Crime and Corruption Commission's

reporting powers. The then Labor state government chose to ignore this important legislation, just as it deliberately chose to ignore the calls by countless Queenslanders for greater accountability and transparency. It was not until the final desperate days before the 2024 election that the former Miles Labor state government belatedly introduced its own legislation on this matter. However, this was nothing more than a hollow attempt to be seen to be doing something, with Labor's bill ultimately lapsing with the dissolution of the 57th Parliament of Queensland.

Labor did not act out of principle; it acted out of political expediency and, ultimately, it failed. The people of Queensland spoke clearly at the 2024 state election. They demanded a government that would respect their right to know and would not hide the truth. The people of Queensland demanded a fresh start, and today the Crisafulli LNP state government is delivering just that. This legislation restores the explicit power for the Crime and Corruption Commission to report at any time about corruption matters and to make public statements about those matters as the Crime and Corruption Commission considers appropriate.

Importantly, this legislation also introduces robust safeguards, including a new set of statutory criteria to ensure that decisions to release information are made independently, impartially and fairly with full regard to human rights, procedural fairness and the public interest. Further, this legislation also carefully balances the public's right to know and the protection of individuals' rights during sensitive investigations. It reflects this Liberal National Party state government's unwavering commitment to ensuring that justice is not only done but seen to be done.

The need for this legislation is underscored by the shameful conduct revealed in both the Trad and Carne reports of the Crime and Corruption Commission, and these are reports that the former Labor state government spent years desperately fighting to keep hidden from the public. It took the election of the Crisafulli LNP state government to finally bring these matters to light because, unlike Labor, the Liberal National Party believes firmly in delivering transparency for Queenslanders. The evidence uncovered by the Crime and Corruption Commission with respect to both reports was damning and demonstrated the behaviour of a government that failed to respect both integrity and independent processes. The Trad report revealed that former deputy premier Jackie Trad inappropriately interfered in the independent recruitment process for the critical role of Under Treasurer. Such actions by the former deputy premier, as extensively reported by the corruption watchdog, underscored the behaviour of a government that sought to impose its will upon institutions and public servants that ought to be above and beyond political interference.

The report by the Crime and Corruption Commission with respect to former public trustee Peter Carne was no less alarming. The Crime and Corruption Commission substantiated multiple allegations against Mr Carne, including regular drunkenness at work, harassment of office staff, misuse of the corporate credit card, directing government staff to complete his university assignments and fostering a workplace culture based on fear and intimidation. Mr Carne even boasted of his political connections at the highest levels of the Labor government—connections that, some may argue, protected him from proper scrutiny for far too long.

The content and conduct uncovered by these reports were not trivial matters. They were indicative of a culture of entitlement, arrogance and impunity that was left unchecked and only allowed to grow under the former Labor state government. This is precisely why strong, independent reporting powers for the Crime and Corruption Commission are essential. Through this legislation, the Crisafulli LNP state government is restoring the ability of the Crime and Corruption Commission to report openly—but always responsibly—on corruption investigations. The Crime and Corruption Commission's ability to make public statements in an appropriate manner, balancing the right to transparency with the obligation to uphold procedural fairness and human rights, will finally be restored.

The LNP state government is also validating past reports and public statements, ensuring that the Crime and Corruption Commission can once again make this information available to the public without fear of legal uncertainty. Critically, the LNP state government is also strengthening procedural fairness provisions to ensure that individuals who are the subject of adverse comment are given the opportunity to respond, including clear timeframes and rights of judicial review. In stark contrast to Labor's hollow gestures, this legislation enshrines true independence for the Crime and Corruption Commission in the tabling of reports. Where Labor sought to control what the public could and could not see, the Crisafulli LNP state government trusts the Crime and Corruption Commission to act impartially, independently and in the public interest.

The events of the past decade under Labor have taught us that strong public institutions, free from political interference, are not optional; they are essential. Without them, the risk of misconduct flourishes, public trust is eroded and democracy itself is weakened. With this legislation, the Liberal National Party Crisafulli state government is drawing a clear line under the secrecy and cover-ups of

the former Palaszczuk and Miles Labor state governments. With the passage of this legislation, Queensland can finally begin a new chapter—a chapter of transparency, accountability and restored public trust. This is incredibly important legislation for Queensland. The public has been calling for this. The LNP is delivering a fresh start when it comes to Queensland, particularly when it comes to restoring openness and transparency, and, as such, I commend the bill to the House.