

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION

Third Report — “Robert Bilos” — Tabling

MR J.N. HYDE (Perth) [10.13 am]: I present for tabling the third report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission, titled “Robert Bilos”.

[See paper 873.]

Mr J.N. HYDE: On 19 March 2009 the parliamentary inspector tabled a report to the committee on an investigation conducted by the Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission, Christopher Steytler, QC, into a complaint to the parliamentary inspector that an officer from the Corruption and Crime Commission may have improperly released to a third party his email complaint to the CCC. The parliamentary inspector informed the committee that the inquiry conducted by the former Acting Parliamentary Inspector, Ken Martin, QC, had received media attention in January and February from which the public may have drawn inferences adverse to the CCC.

The parliamentary inspector advised the committee that, in case it should consider it appropriate to release information about this report, he had prepared a synopsis of it for the committee’s consideration. The parliamentary inspector noted that the committee may consider it inappropriate to release the full report for two reasons: firstly, it identifies private individuals who have provided information to the inquiry; and, secondly, it mentions operational aspects of the commission. The committee considered these issues. The committee has a very strong relationship with the parliamentary inspector. He has agreed to table all his reports through the committee, and that is in keeping with recommendation 2 of our previous report on the operation of the parliamentary inspector and the CCC. The committee agreed and decided to table, without any alteration, as an annexure to this report the entire synopsis that the parliamentary inspector presented to the committee. The committee envisages that this procedure will continue to apply to future reports. For example, the parliamentary inspector will present a report and recommendation to the committee on the information that should be made public.

Again, the committee is very concerned that the reputations of innocent people will not be adversely affected but that, in the interest of transparency, as much information as possible should be made public.

Members will see in this report about the complaint from Mr Robert Bilos that the parliamentary inspector’s recommendation is that on the strength of the information obtained, the previous acting parliamentary inspector, Mr Martin, had concluded that there was no basis for any finding of misconduct against any officer of the commission. There is no evidence to suggest that a copy of the complaint had been obtained from the commission or that the commission had released a copy of it to any person. On the other hand, there was cogent evidence to support the proposition that the third party obtained the complaint by other means. Under the Corruption and Crime Commission Act, the CCC is empowered to look at only corruption or misconduct emanating from the public sector. The complaint in this case was directed at the CCC itself as a public body. Also, there was cogent evidence to suggest that the assault on Mr Bilos had no connection with Mr Bilos making the prior complaint. The parliamentary inspector viewed the information obtained by Mr Martin, and he agrees with the conclusion arrived at by Mr Martin.

MR F.A. ALBAN (Swan Hills) [10.16 am]: I am a member of the Joint Standing Committee of the Corruption and Crime Commission and I draw the attention of the house to the committee’s third report, which has been tabled. My comments might duplicate the comments of the deputy chairman of the committee, the member for Perth.

The important matter raised in this report is that the committee received a report prepared by Christopher Steytler, the parliamentary inspector, which found there was no evidence to suggest that the Corruption and Crime Commission provided a copy of a complaint it received to a third party.

The parliamentary inspector’s report effectively states that the CCC has done nothing wrong. It is important that this committee publicly acknowledge this fact. In my opinion, and in accordance with the recommendations of the committee in its previous report, it was appropriate for the parliamentary inspector to table his report to the committee. It was also appropriate that the parliamentary inspector provide the committee with a synopsis of the report, which he did. It is also appropriate that the parliamentary inspector advise that the full report includes sensitive personal and operational information. The committee gave consideration to tabling only the synopsis and not the full report. The committee agreed with the parliamentary inspector’s recommendation.

In this process the committee fulfils an important filter role to enable reports of this nature to be made public without compromising private individuals or the operational capacity of the CCC. The committee looks forward

to a continuation of the positive working relationship with the parliamentary inspector, which is in the best interest of the Western Australian public.