

*Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission —
Thirtieth Report — “Annual Report 2011–2012” — Motion*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM: I rise this afternoon to support the motion of Hon Nick Goiran that this report be noted, and I welcome the opportunity to do exactly that, certainly for all the reasons that Hon Nick Goiran has already mentioned.

The committee has considered a number of very significant issues over the past 12 months. The fact of the matter is that this committee has looked at some very complex issues and some very interesting and varied issues, and, as Hon Nick Goiran mentioned, there was, in many respects, unanimity on just about everything the committee took on board. The reason for that perhaps largely stems from Hon Nick Goiran’s leadership as chairman of this joint standing committee, and the cooperation of the deputy chair, the member for Swan Hills and me as one of the Legislative Council members. I would certainly like to mention the hard work of our principal research officer, Mr John King, and our research officer, Michael Burton. The outstanding work of this particular secretariat needs to be mentioned. The two gentlemen concerned are most professional, informed and dedicated to the task at hand, and I want to acknowledge that.

I need to acknowledge, as Hon Nick Goiran mentioned, that the debate, discussion and research we engaged in was certainly robust and without fear or favour, and the input from all four members very much needs to be put on the record. I certainly thank the chair for his observations in that respect. The chair mentioned a couple of reports that I will talk about in a while, but the two which come to mind that this joint standing committee investigated and which warrant more attention perhaps than anything else relate to matters of excessive use of force by police officers. I cannot quite recall exactly the number of that particular report out of the 13 we delivered, but that certainly —

Hon Nick Goiran: It was the eighteenth report.

Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM: That was the eighteenth report. There was also the report associated with our discussions with Gail Archer, SC, with respect to rebutting some recommendations of the changed role of the Corruption and Crime Commission that she advised us about in a closed hearing.

I would seriously suggest that all members have a look at the 2011–12 annual report, because it is a bit of an eye-opener in respect of the work this committee has managed over the past 12 months. The committee met 37 times in total; held 10 public hearings attended by a total of 18 persons, which, I might say, were very well scrutinised by local media; held 10 closed hearings attended by a total of 27 persons; met for six briefings at which a total of 17 persons provided information; and formally interviewed three persons. There was some investigative travel involved, particularly members attending the Australian Public Sector Anti-Corruption Conference 2011, which was hosted by the Western Australian Corruption and Crime Commission in Fremantle; the committee was also represented by the chairman and the deputy chairman at the fifth Independent Commission Against Corruption symposium in Hong Kong.

The committee also considered some 262 items of incoming correspondence; dispatched 167 outgoing items of correspondence; made 177 formal resolutions, which is no mean feat in itself; and tabled 13 reports in Parliament, as Hon Nick Goiran has mentioned. Those 13 reports surely represent the yardstick by which committees are most often judged, and I am sure, given the coverage in this house of those reports, that members certainly have some sort of knowledge of the breadth and depth of work that went into those reports. As I indicated before, they are very interesting but complex and varied. I will quote a comment contained within the foreword of this annual report because I think it sums up the thrust of this committee’s work, and, if members like, its work ethos. Hon Nick Goiran states —

... this Committee takes great pride in holding both the Corruption and Crime Commission and the Office of the Parliamentary Inspector to the highest standard of oversight: it is pleasing to report that, in the course of the past twelve months, the Committee has made a total of thirteen reports to Parliament, and in so doing the Committee has provided the Parliament of Western Australia with a wealth of information pertaining to a wide range of matters. Two of these reports represented the culmination of formal inquiries undertaken by the Committee, while a further five were the result of impromptu inquiries made by the Committee into contemporary matters.

Hon Max Trenorden: I say that self-praise is no praise at all, but in your case it is worth the praise.

Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM: I thank Hon Max Trenorden; thank you indeed! After that very impromptu but relevant interjection, I will continue.

The chairman’s foreword continues —

The remaining five reports were associated with the discharge of the Committee's primary function, which is to monitor and report to Parliament on the exercise of the functions of the Corruption and Crime Commission and the Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission. In addition to making these formal reports, the Committee also dealt with a number of enquiries pertaining to the work of either the CCC or the Office of the Parliamentary Inspector as raised by members of the public.

I will not go through the range of reports tabled, but that information is provided in our annual report, starting with the sixteenth report on the resignation of acting CCC commissioner Michelle Hullett, tabled on 17 August 2011, through to the twenty-eighth report, titled "Proceeds of crime and unexplained wealth: A role for the Corruption and Crime Commission?" I note, however, that one of these reports deals with the resignation of the previous parliamentary inspector, Hon Chris Steytler, QC, and that is an issue that this particular committee noted at the time. It was not foreseen, and his loss to that position was something that our committee noted very much in the twenty-fourth report, titled "The intention of the Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission to retire"; that report was tabled on 21 March 2012. I will not talk further about the tabled reports.

As I have indicated, this report contains plenty of information about the nature of the public hearings, together with the closed hearings and the briefings, and all the other information Hon Nick Goiran mentioned in his foreword. On that note, I certainly have great pleasure in recommending that the Committee of the Whole note this report.

Question put and passed.

Progress reported, pursuant to standing orders.