

CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION INQUIRY - EVIDENCE FROM MR SPAGNOLO

6. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Premier:

I refer to paragraph 9(6) of the CCC report into the “Godfather affair” written by Commissioner Hammond, which states -

Because of the public interest circumstances pertaining to this matter, I direct that any evidence given before the Commission by Messrs Drago and D’Orazio may be disclosed.

Given that Mr Spagnolo also gave evidence, albeit not under oath, to the commission on 23 February 2006 that directly contradicts the evidence given by the Minister for Police, will the Premier now request a transcript of the evidence from the CCC and table it in this Parliament?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

I thank the member for Warren-Blackwood for the question. No, I will not. If the CCC wishes to release transcripts, I encourage it to do so. I ask the member to please bear in mind that Adam Spagnolo is facing charges related to matters subject to this investigation. That is why I believe he was not required to give evidence on oath. That is why it would be most unwise at the moment to have transcripts of his evidence released. This man is facing charges.

Mr P.D. Omodei: Is that because of the conflict with the Minister for Police’s version of events?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I do not think the member for Warren-Blackwood honestly believes that, but I appreciate the fact that he said it.

Mr M.J. Birney: It does; the CCC believes that.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: That is not why Mr Spagnolo is facing charges. We must be very careful about what statements we make in advance of Mr Spagnolo going to trial. In its first statement in response to my reference to this matter, the Corruption and Crime Commission made the point very clearly that Adam Spagnolo was facing charges. Tony Drago and the police minister gave evidence under oath. The assessment of their evidence by the CCC is quite clear. The CCC has categorically cleared the police minister of any wrongdoing whatsoever. Please let us not seek to interfere in or somehow pervert the process Adam Spagnolo now faces; we would be very unwise to do so. Members should cast their minds back to the development of the Official Corruption Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Corruption and Crime Commission and the debates in the community about the wisdom or otherwise of taking evidence in public hearings. Apart from concern about the potential damage that could spill onto innocent parties, there was also concern about cases that were likely to go before or were already before the courts. The member for Warren-Blackwood knows that such interference would be very unwise. I have absolutely no reason whatsoever to want any information withheld for political reasons. The CCC could not have made a clearer statement about Mr D’Orazio, the police minister, and I will leave it at that.