




Speech By
Mark Boothman

MEMBER FOR THEODORE

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CRIME AND CORRUPTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (12.05 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Crime and Corruption and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. In opening, I would like to say that the people of Queensland certainly hold high expectations of all elected and appointed officials. It is a great honour to represent one's peers. Our peers certainly place a high level of trust in us. I thank the members of the committee and the secretariat staff and those who made submissions on this bill.

Unfortunately, throughout history there have been those who abused their positions of power. The electorate of Theodore is named after one such individual. In 1922 the then premier of Queensland, 'Red' Ted Theodore, and Speaker, William McCormack, were involved in the alleged sale of mining properties in North Queensland to the Queensland government at inflated prices. Both Theodore and McCormack each secretly held 25 per cent ownership in the properties. The scandal forced those individuals to resign from their positions back in 1930. Ted Theodore happened to be the treasurer of Australia at the time. On an interesting note, the Queensland government at the time did not charge either man with an offence. I understand where the committee and the government are going with this bill. Hopefully, this bill would have enveloped what they were doing and held them accountable.

There were seven submissions to the committee. They were from the Queensland Ombudsman, the Australia Institute, the LGAQ, QUT, the Crime and Corruption Commission, the Queensland Law Society and the Environmental Defenders Office. The policy objective of the bill is to widen the definition of 'corruption' and implement the recommendations of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee's report No. 97 and report No. 99. I find it interesting reading that the Queensland Law Society expressed concerns about the expanded definition of 'corrupt conduct'. It stated—

We understand the need for the Commission to have access to extensive powers in order to effect its functions. However, we do not consider that these powers should be open ended and limitless. The definition as drafted is exceptionally broad and may be open to being construed too broadly.

It should also be noted that the non-government members recorded their concerns about this matter. The bill proposes that corrupt conduct may now include a broader spectrum such as dishonestly obtaining a benefit from payment or application of public funds or deposition of state assets, fraudulently obtaining government appointments or retaining government appointments.

The non-government members also highlighted the concerns that the CCC may be overwhelmed with vexatious complaints that are far removed from normal CCC investigations. Furthermore, in dealing with this treasure trove of complaints, the CCC would need additional resources to sift through them. I understand the concerns by the non-government members on this matter.

Many times throughout my parliamentary terms in this great place, many of my constituents have expressed that government must be open and transparent, that corruption at the highest levels must be weeded out, especially in recent times with what has transpired in some councils in Queensland. It has certainly tarnished and put a black mark against democracy in this state. One of my residents David Chan is very vocal when it comes to public officials misappropriating. He constantly rings me up and

stops at my roadside offices to express his dismay at these individuals who hold high office. I agree with him. We must as parliamentarians ensure high standards and openness and transparency in government. One thing that the opposition does in this state is hold the government to account to being open and transparent to ensure that we weed out any potential wrongdoings in this state.