




Speech By
Hon. Jeff Seeney

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 21 November 2013

**COMMITTEES: SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS, ORDER OF APPOINTMENT,
PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMITTEE, MEMBERSHIP**

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.51 pm): I think the last three-quarters of an hour or so has been one of the least enlightening periods that I have ever spent in this parliament. In the last three-quarters of an hour or so we have been treated to a regurgitation of the same hysterical nonsense that we saw here last night and that we saw here again in question time this morning. We have seen from both the member for Bundamba and the member for South Brisbane what one would expect to see from people who know that they have failed and hysterically seek to blame somebody else. They seek to regurgitate the old conspiracy theories and present the parliament with their twisted perceptions of the past, in some way hoping that that will justify the failure that they themselves admitted to this parliament this morning.

We saw from the Leader of the Opposition an address that was a turgid repetition of the word 'cover-up'. It was cover-up, cover-up, cover-up, cover-up, but she never explained once what it was that the parliament was supposed to be covering up. In fact, what has happened in this parliament over the last 24 hours is the exact opposite. What we have done is to ensure that this document was not covered up by the members of the committee who were supposed to provide the author of this document with the opportunity for natural justice, an opportunity to have his say. We ensured that this was not covered up. We ensured that the member for South Brisbane and the member for Bundamba could not cover up this document. We ensured that it was available here in the parliament; that Dr Levy had an opportunity to have his side of the story heard, an opportunity to put his case, a basic requirement of fairness and justice that everybody would subscribe to—but not the member for Bundamba and the member for South Brisbane, who have demonstrated their political bias and political motivation more clearly today than was evident yesterday. Even today in question time and again here tonight you cannot but fully comprehend the extent of bias which permeated that committee. That is why the government has taken the action of moving the motion tonight. I rise to support that motion that has been moved by the Leader of the House.

It is important to note that the first two parts of the motion that has been moved by the Leader of House are exactly what the committee suggested when the chairman of that committee tabled this document in the parliament earlier this morning. It is exactly what they suggested. What the chairman of the committee tabled was a document that suggested a number of actions, all of which the government take tonight. What the chairman of the committee also did when she tabled this document was to concede and to admit that the committee could no longer do its job. That is what this document says. It says, 'The committee of which I am the chair cannot complete the task that this parliament has given us and we recommend that the parliament set up another committee to do our job for us because we cannot do it anymore.' That is what this document says. The chairman of the committee had to come in here and say to the parliament that 'the member for Bundamba, the

member for South Brisbane and the Leader of the Opposition have demonstrated such bias that the committee can no longer perform its function. Therefore, we recommend to the parliament that the parliament sets up another committee to do the job that can no longer be done by the people who have responsibility'. Of course, the chairman of the committee was right. The committee had become so biased in its approach to the issue that it could no longer consider the matter, it could no longer be charged with the responsibility to act on behalf of this parliament. The third part that we have added to the motion tonight—the words that we have added to those that were suggested by the chairman of that committee—brings a solution to that intolerable situation.

Dr Douglas: Cowardice! You are a bunch of cowards. You above all, 15 years—

Ms Trad interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, pause the clock. Order, members! I can hear shouting from up in the back corner. Your interjections are not being received. There were interjections to my left as well that the Deputy Premier is not taking. I call the Deputy Premier.

Mr SEENEY: I always welcome interjections, but I cannot take them if they are as nonsensical as the ones that come from the member for Gaven. It is important that the parliament and everybody who is listening or who reads the proceedings of the parliament understand clearly what is happening here tonight. The government is moving to ensure that we do have a strong CMC and that we do have a strong and effective PCMC because the PCMC has come into this parliament and said, 'We can no longer do our job.' The reasons that it can no longer do its job have been clearly illustrated to the parliament by the member for Bundamba and the member for South Brisbane. Of course, in the debate tonight we have heard all of this hysterical paranoia and all of these conspiracy theories that somehow or other we are attacking the CMC and we are dismantling the PCMC—quite the opposite. This parliament has the responsibility to make sure that the composition of the PCMC is such that it can carry out the functions which this parliament charges the committee to so do. Clearly, the committee has indicated to us the obvious: that it can no longer do that.

It is gross arrogance, I would suggest, for the two members who have themselves conceded that they can no longer carry out those functions to suggest repeatedly in the House tonight that somehow or other no other members of this parliament can do it, that no other members of this parliament are fit and proper persons to sit on that committee, that the committee cannot be constituted by anybody else but them, that they are the only members who have the ability to carry out this role. Of course that is nonsense. There are a great many other members in this parliament who have the ability to serve on that committee, and that is the end result that this motion before the House will bring about.

I think we have had enough of the hysterical rantings and conspiracy theories that we have heard from the members on the other side. We have a situation here where the government has acted responsibly when it was clear that there was unacceptable bias in the committee that was charged with an important responsibility on behalf of that parliament. That bias was admitted by the chairman of the committee. She came into this parliament and conceded that the committee could no longer fulfil its function and recommended to us as a parliament that we appoint another committee to undertake that function. We have acceded to that request in every way, and we have also accepted the advice from the committee that they can no longer perform the function that the parliament expects of them. We will move to ensure that there is a committee in place that can fulfil that function.

It is important that that committee that we have set up on the recommendation of the member for Gladstone does have all of the information and all of the documents to consider this matter that are available. That is why we have provided the opportunity to Dr Levy to provide his side of the story to the parliament tonight; an opportunity that was denied to him by the committee, the members for South Brisbane and Bundamba and their majority colleagues on the committee. It is important for the parliament and for the completeness of the issue that those documents are available.

I am sure that the members, whoever they are, that will be appointed to that select committee can consider those documents and the situation that we have seen unfold here over the last couple of days and make a recommendation or decision on behalf of us all. That will be the task that they will be charged with. I do not think that there has been anything new added to this debate tonight. I think what we have heard from the other side is a regurgitation of what we have heard repeated endlessly yesterday, last night and again this morning and in question time. I would suggest there is nothing to be further gained by continuing to repeat that sort of hysteria and those sort of conspiracy theories, so I therefore move—

That the motion be put.