



**Crime and Corruption
Commission**

QUEENSLAND

CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMISSION

MAKING ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPT CONDUCT PUBLIC: IS IT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST?

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC FORUM

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Panel members:

Mr Alan MacSporran QC
Mr Marshall Irwin
Mr Richard Bingham
Dr Rebecca Denning

CCC Chairperson and Panel Chair
CCC Ordinary Commissioner
Queensland Integrity Commissioner
CCC Director, Policy and Research

Speaker:

Mr Charles Steff

Mr MacSporran QC Mr STEFF, thanks for coming. Just for the record can you give us your full name?

Mr Steff My name is Charles Alfred STEFF.

Mr MacSporran QC And would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr Steff Yes. I'll introduce myself, really. I'm a 77 year old pensioner. I have no understanding very much of law, but I do have a deep understanding of justice and I think that it is procedural matters that I'm concerned in here. Over the past 10 years, I've endeavoured to get some answers to a rather serious problem where the Commission, the CMC at that time, devolved problems onto another entity, which was – I understand the CMC is independent. But once it devolves that matter it's no longer their problem, and it becomes dependent upon a political party, with a Minister and with an interest, maybe, of suppression of problems, especially if they have been endemic problems in a particular area, it's the opposite. It's the interest of those people to keep a lid on such things. And I've had, where I've applied for RTI and I've had, coming back, and it said these matters are private and confidential and mentioned there are two newspaper items. So they're putting a blanket over the whole lot and then I've got to fight for individual ones to be released.

I researched a lot. I gained a lot of information and I believe that different entities and different departments endeavoured to keep a lid on things. Absolute proof, I mean I'm talking absolute proof, which would stand up in any court, of wrongdoing, was just ignored. The Commission, that's the CMC and now you, you are in a position to oversee the complaints that have been made and how they've been acted on. I don't think that the oversight is correct. I think it was overlooked, if you get what I mean.

My complaints were that serious that my local member came here and we were interviewed over a matter of things. Nothing eventuated, and eventually my local member put it to the PCMC, which took evidence from – or at least statements from people in your department here, as well as others, and decided to do nothing. And yet they had, there, they had the ability to have a look at

absolutely hard proof and nothing went. I'm disappointed.

The person it concerned was my late wife and I believe I owe it to her. When this went before the CMC, by the way, or rather PCMC, it had been going on for six and a half years. It took eleven months from the meeting here to get a reply regarding that meeting from a person quite high up in your organisation. I just don't think that the clarity is here. I hear a lot today about the law, and yesterday about the law. Where's the justice, the balance? There isn't. Not in my estimation anyway.

And as I say, I do welcome the chance to come here and express this. It's been a bit of a festering sore on the back of me I can't get to, for the last 10 years. And it's still, as you might be aware, there are still matters which I won't mention now, but are still involving you. And that's basically all I have to say. As regards to allegations being made public, no. No, I don't agree with that at all, only when proceedings are being initiated and charges laid, that's all, and that goes for whoever complains and who is complained about. I think that that's essential. That's justice.

Mr MacSporran QC

Thank you, Mr STEFF.

Mr Irwin

Mr STEFF, can I just ask you to clarify why you've come to that position, because as I've read it you've made two submissions.

Mr Steff

Yes, yes, I made two.

Mr Irwin

The first one I took as taking an opposite view to the view you're expressing today and I was just wondering why you've changed your perspective, and secondly, why you are saying what you're saying.

Mr Steff

May I clarify that, in that I agree that all allegations should be aired once charges are laid.

Mr Irwin

Right.

Mr Steff

I probably omitted to put that in that initial submission.

Mr Irwin

All right, okay, well that clarifies that. Is there a reason why you state that position that allegations should not be aired until charges are laid?

- Mr Steff Well, yes. I might say that just recently, I believe Wednesday, there was an item in the Australian where a prominent Federal Minister, ex-Federal Minister, the AFP suddenly decided that they're not going to proceed anymore with the investigations into him. But because of the media frenzy and the feeding frenzy on that you couldn't turn the TV on without seeing his face there, and to me that seems that it has ruined his career, and that's one of the reasons.
- Mr Irwin So you're concerned about the protection of reputations?
- Mr Steff Of course, of course. And it's not only – it bounces off onto maybe their children at school, where taunting becomes bullying and the likes.
- Mr Irwin Yes.
- Mr Steff I'm just an ordinary guy living on a few hundred acres and I love the life here, but I found that my life has been on an edge for the last ten years since this happened to my wife.
- Mr Irwin And despite the fact that you're unhappy with the procedure, as you described it to us earlier, you're still firmly of the view that you've expressed in relation to the non-publication of allegations until the time of charging?
- Mr Steff Of course, yes, yes, I think that that would be unjust.
- Mr Irwin All right.
- Mr Steff It's just that I find it hard to understand that matters can be devolved to such a degree that an investigation into corrupt practice can go so far down the line that a person in peoples and cultures is investigating corruption, and that's exactly what happened.
- Mr Irwin All right, yes, I think I understand your position. I just really wanted to clarify it so that I could understand where your two submissions fitted into each other.
- Mr Steff Yes, yes.
- Mr Irwin And I appreciate you, firstly making the submissions, and secondly, coming here today, and thirdly, clarifying that point for us. Thank you.

Mr Bingham

Nothing from me. Thanks, Mr STEFF.

Mr MacSporran QC

Thank you, Mr STEFF. Thanks for coming.

END OF SPEAKER