

# Public Trustee office woes strike a nerve with disgruntled ex-employees and clients

**A former client claims her family was a victim of ‘gross mismanagement’. A former employee said the staff situation was so toxic she walked out after more than 30 years without a farewell. The Public Trustee of Queensland’s woes continue to strike a nerve with many who have crossed its path.**

Anthony Marx, The Courier-Mail  
Subscriber only

July 10, 2019 6:01am



Staff share broken culture of government agency

WE CLEARLY seem to have struck a nerve.

City Beat’s in-tray continues to buckle under the weight of correspondence describing the alleged mistreatment of Public Trustee of Queensland clients and claims of a thoroughly rotten corporate culture inside the organisation.

Armed with a stack of evidence, one former client has alleged her family was a victim of “gross mismanagement” that included “backdated trust deeds, false authorities for management of bank accounts using names of predeceased clients and deceased estate fraud” among other transgressions.

A former employee said yesterday she couldn’t take any more after 33 years on the job and just had to walk out the door without a farewell.

“There are no words to explain how toxic the staff situation became,” she told us.

“Supervision jobs were given to staff who could walk the walk and talk the talk, but had no idea on how to do the job.”



Peter Carne has been suspended as CEO of The Public Trustee of Queensland.

Meanwhile, we’ve come across an intriguing backstory about how now-suspended PT boss Peter Carne, a long-time Labor identity, was reappointed to the job in 2016.

Carne originally snared the gig in 2009 during the reign of then-Premier Anna Bligh but he got the chop in 2014 after Campbell Newman assumed power.

Following Annastacia Palaszczuk’s unlikely win in 2015, he won his old job back — but only after the plug had been pulled on a recruitment campaign that had short-listed two very capable female candidates.

One insider tells us that at the last moment they canned the whole recruitment process which had taken months amid fears within the government that Carne would take legal action if he was not reappointed.

## **STILL LOOKING**

Jane Prentice is still looking for employment after she was rolled as the federal member for Ryan by her former campaign director, Julian Simmonds.

But the longtime Brisbane pollie has plenty of volunteer work to keep her busy in the meantime.

She's just been elected the President of Scouts Queensland following a longtime association with the group and has taken on the role of honorary secretary for the Brookfield Show as well.

Prentice is also an advocate for an outfit known as Zonta, which helps raise money to supply birthing kits to disadvantaged women in Papua New Guinea and Africa.



Jane Prentice has been elected President of Scouts Queensland.

Indeed, when City Beat caught up with her yesterday, Prentice had just wrapped up a crack-of-dawn stint for Zonta flogging sausages outside the Bunnings Warehouse at Stafford.

With Scouts, she's hoping to gin up a bit of interest from corporate types to get involved in the youth organisation, which has about 10,000 members and 3200 adult volunteers in 234 dens spread across the state.

The group has a highly ambitious goal of more than doubling membership to 22,000 within the next three years.

"My son was in Scouts and it was the greatest opportunity for him," she said, recalling weekend camps that saw him come home exhausted and filthy.

"I want to promote Scouts and look at programs to get businesses involved. Scouts teaches leadership and responsibility and in this day it's great to have an organisation that gives them the confidence to lead."

Prentice took on the role after previously serving as chair of the Brisbane North region of Scouts.



Julian Simmonds replaced Jane Prentice as the federal member for Ryan.

Simmonds, of course, won office in the May election after besting Prentice in a bitter preselection battle.

That prompted Prentice to note in parliament that she had fallen victim to some decidedly un-Scout-like traits.

“Impatient ambition, treachery and lies are now more than ever part of our political fabric,” she said during her final speech in April.