

CCC poised to act if more people join Trad in seeking to block its findings



By [Matt Dennien](#)

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The acting head of Queensland’s Crime and Corruption Commission has suggested the agency may be forced to seek external advice about its operations and exposure to legal risk if more people try to block publication of its findings through the courts.

Two separate reports completed by the corruption watchdog are now the subject of legal action by [former deputy premier Jackie Trad](#) and public trustee Peter Carne, the latter of whom is arguing the report’s release would [breach his human rights](#).



Both Trad and Carne have launched court actions against the CCC after the corruption watchdog sought to publicly report on separate investigations involving the pair. MICHELLE SMITH

Asked at a public meeting of the CCC and its parliamentary oversight committee whether either body had sought advice on any precedent that could be set by decisions in favour of Trad or Carne, [acting CCC chair Bruce Barbour](#) said he thought not.

“The CCC’s obviously got an obligation to act in accordance with the law and lawfully, I think that’s the first element,” Barbour said at Tuesday’s meeting.

“The second element is that, as far as I’m aware, there wouldn’t be any sufficient evidentiary basis to be seeking advice at this stage because we’re not talking about a large number of matters.

“Should there be an increase in the number of people who start to take notice to the Supreme Court to prevent the publication of reports, it may well be a matter that we would seek advice on.”

A further question to Barbour – also from LNP Deputy Leader Jarrod Bleijie – on the cost to the CCC so far in the Trad matter was taken on notice and expected to be made public at a later date.

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk confirmed in March that Trad was covered by an indemnity scheme enabling the former minister to [have her costs met by the government](#).

Palaszczuk’s disclosure prompted a statement from the Centre for Privacy, Transparency and Accountability – comprising current and former Queensland public servants – that described the use of public money to suppress official investigations as “incredibly complex and dangerous”.

A non-publication order banning the identification of Trad in relation to the court action was [lifted by Supreme Court Justice Martin Burns on March 17](#) after Bleijie revealed details of the matter under parliamentary privilege. However, the media was still largely [unable to repeat the details](#).

The situation even prompted a rare public comment from the office of then chief justice Catherine Holmes.

On Tuesday, Bleijie told the meeting he believed the report relating to Trad and the recruitment of a senior Treasury official could be released despite the court proceedings.

Barbour said any decision about its release, and consideration of the effect of court orders still in place, would have to be made by the parliamentary crime and corruption committee.

Separately, Barbour confirmed a draft report from the commission's [Operation Workshop investigation](#) – covering complaints around the seizing and wiping of a laptop from the office of outgoing Integrity Commissioner Nikola Stepanov – had now been finalised.

The report, expected to be released publicly once finalised, would be provided to the committee and parties involved for procedural fairness processes in coming weeks, amid a busy period for the agency.

Barbour said this was due to COVID impacts on staffing and the resources [required to engage with the active commission of inquiry](#) sparked by the Logan council matter.

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