



CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMISSION

TRANSCRIPT OF INVESTIGATIVE HEARING

10 CONDUCTED AT LEVEL 2, NORTH TOWER, 515 ST PAULS TERRACE,
FORTITUDE VALLEY WITH RESPECT TO

File No: CO-16-1664

HEARING NO: 17/0001

DAY 8 - TUESDAY 13 JUNE 2017
(DURATION: 1HR 32MINS)

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LEGEND

PO Presiding Officer – ALAN MACSPORRAN QC
CA Counsel Assisting – GLEN RICE QC
30 HRO Hearing Room Orderly – MELISSA LETONDEUR
W Witness – Trent Alan DIXON
LR Legal Representative – N/A

PO Good morning, everyone. This is a hearing of the Crime and Corruption Commission conducted under section 176 of the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*.

Before I commence with the formalities, there are some housekeeping matters that I should attend to briefly.

10 In terms of evacuation procedures, in the unlikely event that the building fire alarm activates, we request that you remain seated and await instructions. If evacuation is required, please follow the directions of the fire wardens, who you will be able to identify by their red and yellow safety hats. You will be directed to the fire stairs outside this room and then to the evacuation point outside the building. If you have any mobility concerns, please identify those to the fire warden, and assistance will be provided to you. Signs outlining the evacuation procedures have been placed at the public gallery today.

20 The Commission has published a number of practice guidelines on our website, and I am assuming for the purposes of this hearing that you have all had access to those and are familiar with them.

In addition to these, I ask that you please observe the following rules, or the rules that were displayed as you walked in, but, in particular, can you please follow the direction of CCC staff and Queensland Police officers who are present.

30 Do not disrupt or interrupt the hearing. Switch your mobile phones off or to silent or any electronic devices you have to silent and refrain from moving around the room while the hearing is in session. Everyone should also be aware that we are live streaming the recording of the public hearing today.

The Commission resolved recently, as you are aware, to extend the public hearings to include the Logan Council, and that is the prime purpose of the hearings over the next few days, although there are some tidy-up brackets of evidence relating to at least the Moreton Shire Council to be led in this bracket.

40 I am conducting the hearing as the Presiding Officer, and Mr Glen RICE QC has been appointed as Counsel Assisting the inquiry. I nominate as the hearing room orderly Ms Melissa LETONDEUR to administer an oath or affirmation or any other solemn declaration to any witness appearing at the hearings.

50 Pursuant to sections 5 and 5C of the *Recording of Evidence Act 1962*, I direct that any evidence to be given and any ruling, direction or other matter be recorded by recording equipment and that Kathy ROBERTSON and Traccee HUNTER will be the recorders for the purposes of today's hearings.

At the original hearing, I did make a direction under subsection 197(5) of the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* in relation to the evidence to be given here by witnesses. For those of you who are not familiar with that, I will make the direction again, so it's clear.

Witnesses who come here are not entitled to refuse to answer questions. It is a compulsory hearing process, but there are protections given in the Act if I make this direction so that people can be assured that whatever they say here, even if it tends to incriminate them, will not be able to be used against them in any subsequent proceedings. So it is a standard protection. It is what's called a blanket protection that I am proposing to give the witnesses.

10 I direct for the purpose of these proceedings that all answers given by an individual and all documents or things produced by an individual are to be regarded as having been given or produced on objection by the individual. That simply means that every witness now has the protection of the Act, and whatever they say, as I say, even if incriminating, cannot be used against them in subsequent proceedings.

20 The hearing times will be approximately these. We will sit from 10am until about 11.30 and we will have a morning break from about 11.30 to 11.45 or thereabouts. The lunch break will be between 1 and 2pm, and the afternoon session will conclude at about 4 o'clock. That's a rough guide as to the hearing times. That might change depending on availability and the convenience of witnesses and the parties who represent them.

30 It is proposed that at the end of each day of the proceedings, any exhibits tendered during the course of the day will be published on the CCC website. Some exhibits have had personal information redacted. If there are any concerns about the publication of any of the exhibits or parts thereof, the witness or their legal representative should make a submission before the end of the day in relation to that matter. It is anticipated that a transcript of each day's proceedings will be available on the CCC website by about 8 o'clock each evening.

Mr RICE, are you ready to proceed or do you need more time?

CA No, Commissioner. There are six witnesses whose attendance is scheduled today. The first of those, I call Trent Alan DIXON.

PO Thank you.

40 Good morning, Mr DIXON. Do you have any objection to taking an oath on the Bible?

W No.

PO I will ask you to be sworn in, then. Thank you.

HRO The evidence which I shall give.

W The evidence which I shall give.

50 HRO In these proceedings.

W In these proceedings.

HRO Shall be the truth.

W Shall be the truth.

HRO The whole truth.

W The whole truth.

HRO And nothing but the truth.

W And nothing but the truth.

10 HRO So help me God.

W So help me God.

CA Is your name Trent Alan DIXON?

W Yes.

20 CA Mr DIXON, you are appearing today in response to an attendance notice; am I right?

W Yes.

CA Can I show you this?

W Yes.

CA Is that a copy of the notice you received asking you to appear today?

30 W Yes.

CA I tender that notice.

PO That will be Exhibit 102.

CA Mr DIXON, you have some tertiary qualifications in marketing, I think?

W Yes.

40 CA What are they?

W Bachelor of Commerce in marketing and a Masters of Marketing Management.

CA You worked for a time, I think, as marketing manager at the Redcliffe Leagues Club?

W Yes.

50 CA Over what time frame, Mr DIXON?

W About six years, just short.

CA What years, do you remember?

W I started in December 2005.

- CA Do you know some of the councillors at the Moreton Bay Regional Council?
- W Yes.
- CA I will just give you a few names. Do you know the Mayor, Allan SUTHERLAND?
- 10 W Yes.
- CA Councillor Mike CHARLTON?
- W Yes.
- CA Councillor James HOUGHTON?
- W Yes.
- 20 CA To take Councillor SUTHERLAND first, how did you first come to know him?
- W I met him through my time at the leagues club. When I first started, it was Christmas time. I met him at a Christmas function. That was the first time I met him, December 2005.
- CA Was there any business that the leagues club had with the council, or in what capacity did you meet him?
- 30 W We worked with the council. Obviously we're a community club, we worked with all levels of government, but on that occasion it was just some sort of Christmas function.
- CA Did you have some ongoing contact with him subsequent to that?
- W Yes.
- CA In what capacity?
- 40 W Mainly at various functions, but the club expanded during my time there with different developments - pools and shopping centres and whatnot - so the politicians were often there to open things, cut ribbons, that sort of stuff, so it was ongoing.
- CA Was it a professional relationship or did you become friends?
- W Professional.
- 50 CA Councillor SUTHERLAND was a candidate for Mayor in the 2012 election; correct?
- W Yes.
- CA Did you offer some assistance with his 2012 election campaign?
- W Yes.

CA What was that?

W Marketing advice.

CA How did that come about?

W He asked me.

10 CA Well, what was the content of what you did for him during that campaign?

W I gave him general marketing advice or principles on the marketing collateral he was developing for his campaign.

CA Was there a fee attached to the service you gave?

W Yes.

CA So did you charge him for it?

20 W Yes.

CA And you were paid for that?

W Yes.

CA Do you recall what amount?

W No.

30 CA Some thousands?

W Probably, yes. Yes.

CA We will move forward to the 2016 campaign where SUTHERLAND was also the successful candidate for Mayor in that election. Did you play some role in his campaign?

W Yes, similar. A similar role.

40 CA Can you give us some detail of what you did?

W The same as the previous one. I gave him advice on his marketing collateral, making sure he had the right message via the right marketing channel to the right people.

CA What do you mean by "marketing collateral"?

W Well, his campaign went across a number of different mediums, from billboards to flyers to newspaper. I gave him basic advice on how to make sure the content was engaging and effective and, whatever the message was, we were using the right medium for the target audience. Just basic marketing principles, really.

50 CA Did you attend some meetings for campaign purposes?

- W Yes.
- CA Were they held at a particular location?
- W At his house.
- CA With what regularity?
- 10 W Directly before the election they were weekly, but they probably started off every few weeks and became more regular the closer we got to the election.
- CA Were you then a regular attendee?
- W Yes.
- CA Did you go to all of them, so far as you know?
- W I think so, as far as I know.
- 20 CA Were there other regular attendees at these meetings?
- W Yes.
- CA Can you remember who they were?
- W Yes, most of them, yes.
- CA Can you give us some names?
- 30 W Well, the Mayor and his wife. His daughter, Emma. Noel POWELL. Myself. James HOUGHTON. Mike CHARLTON. Probably not as regularly for those two. Corinne. And there was another gentleman. I just don't recall his name.
- CA You mentioned Noel POWELL. What was his capacity within these meetings?
- W I guess it was similar to mine, in that he just gave his advice, but he's sort more of a - although they were informal meetings, he might have been considered more of a chairperson to keep the meeting going, moving on to different topics.
- 40 CA Was there a degree of formality about it, in the sense were there minutes kept?
- W There might have been minutes kept, yes. I think there was - not formal minutes that were distributed to all of the attendees each week, but I'm sure Gayle or Emma was probably taking notes, yes.
- 50 CA You mentioned the other councillors, Mr CHARLTON and Mr HOUGHTON, not as regular in attendance as you?
- W They were pretty regular, but sometimes they couldn't stay for the whole time. Yes, they were there, but they might miss one here or there.

- CA Can you give us your recollection as to the content of the meetings?
- W A number of different things. Key points that the Mayor was pushing to get re-elected, like university, the rail and free Wi-Fi, some key points to his platform were discussed and how best to communicate that to the different audiences. There were updates on fundraising and expenditures of the marketing campaign, and that was probably it.
- 10 CA Did meetings include the subject of fundraising?
- W Briefly.
- CA Were they more extensive than the subject of fundraising?
- W Sorry, can you repeat that?
- CA Were the meetings more extensive in the matters discussed beyond fundraising?
- 20 W Yes. The fundraising was a very small portion of the meeting. Most of it was strategy around the marketing, the election campaign itself, and as you get closer to the election, you know, getting together manpower to man the polling booths with the How to Vote Cards and all that sort of stuff, which is quite a large task.
- CA So what was your contribution over this series of meetings?
- W Just what I said before, in terms of the marketing.
- 30 CA Just the marketing side of it?
- W Yes.
- CA Did you glean from the meetings why the other councillors, Mr CHARLTON and Mr HOUGHTON, were in attendance at times?
- W I didn't sit there at the time and think why are all these people in the room.
- 40 CA What contribution did they make to the meetings?
- W Well, they're politicians. They've been through a lot of elections. They give good advice on the collateral, better advice than I probably was. And obviously they - the Mayor's campaign sort of goes across the whole territory, so they were in it, and on occasion they would, you know, share ideas.
- CA Well, ideas as to what?
- 50 W On the marketing collateral, what's going to go on the flyer.
- CA Whose marketing collateral?
- W The marketing collateral for the campaign.
- CA For the Mayor?

- W Yes. Their own as well. They would say what they're doing in their patch.
- CA Was there any discussion about their own election as opposed to the Mayor's election?
- W Yes, yes.
- CA Give him any details?
- 10 W Just basically, you know, "I'm going to do this. Why don't you try this. For my area, I'm going to put this on my flyer", something along those lines.
- CA Was there any talk of How to Vote Cards?
- W Yes.
- CA And what they might depict or contain?
- 20 W Yes, pretty much - exactly what's going to go on it, how many they're going to get printed, where they're going to put them.
- CA When you say "they", are we speaking of councillors other than the Mayor?
- W Yes, well, the Mayor and James and Mike.
- CA They compared notes, did they, as to what should go on the How to Vote Cards?
- 30 W Discussion around it.
- CA Was there any discussion about joint How to Vote Cards?
- W Yes.
- CA Do you remember any of the detail of that?
- 40 W Not really, just that they talked about it. How to Vote Cards and joint and all that sort of stuff wasn't my area of expertise. I was more just checking the sort of finished product and giving my advice at that point. I wasn't saying who should be on a How to Vote Card or anything like that. I'm sure they had discussions about it, but I don't recollect how that all went down.
- CA Was there any discussion about other collateral, such as signage?
- W All collateral, all marketing collateral - billboards, radio ads, everything was discussed at the meetings.
- 50 CA Did those discussions include Councillors CHARLTON and HOUGHTON?
- W Yes.
- CA Sharing ideas as to what?

- W I just got the impression that they were all experienced councillors that had been through a number of elections, and they were basically just discussing election campaigns, what to put on flyers, when to send them, you know, how we're looking. General discussion around that happened at the meetings.
- CA Was there any discussion about payment of expenses for such signage and other collateral?
- 10 W There was. Not a lot. Just sort of an update from time to time how much the different campaigns were going to cost and whether we could go ahead with them or whether we have to reduce, you know, the size of it, if it was a flyer drop, for instance. Just general updates on that from time to time.
- CA Was there any specific discussion about the source of payment, that is to say, the source of money for payment of campaign expenses?
- 20 W In the fundraising discussions?
- CA Right. Give us your recollection about that.
- W Generally just an update at the meeting on how the fundraising was going, what the sort of tally was up to, and if they could - as a result of that, how much they could spend on the various marketing campaigns.
- CA Well, try to be specific. Whose campaigns are we speaking about?
- 30 W Well, the Mayor's campaign.
- CA I am just interested to ask you to what extent the campaign expenses of the other councillors was also a matter of discussion?
- W Oh, very, very little. I think they might have discussed one campaign where they sort of split the cost of it if they both appeared on a flyer. I don't recall the specifics of it, but it's possible that that came up for discussion. It wasn't a major part of the meetings or a recurring item, but it was probably discussed.
- 40 CA Do you know of Moreton Futures Trust?
- W Yes.
- CA How did you first hear about it, do you remember?
- W During the campaign, I heard about it.
- CA The 2016 election campaign?
- 50 W Yes.
- CA How did you come to hear about it?
- W Well, a person called Rob COMISKEY was donating to the campaign and he wanted to know who to make the cheque out to. At that stage, I didn't

know, so I found out - I raised it and asked and that's who I had to make it out to - or Rob had to make it out to.

CA Did you have some communication with him about that?

W With Rob, yes.

CA Was that in person or over the phone?

10 W Person, I think. In person.

CA How did that originate, do you remember?

W I don't remember how it originated.

CA Did you approach him? Did he approach you?

20 W Rob was - I asked him if he wanted to - he was looking to - I guess with Rob, I'd known him for a few years and I originally sort of gave him some just general advice, not in a paid capacity, on how we sort of treated dealing with governments when I was at Redcliffe, just to give him some advice, because at the time I think he was looking to improve his relationships with the different levels of government in his own working capacity.

30 So we'd already had those sort of discussions, and then when that election came around in 2016 and they were fundraising for it, I went to Rob and said, "Is that something you're interested in?", and it turns out he was, and he was prepared to donate. It was at that stage I found out what the Moreton Bay - well, who to write the cheque out to.

CA What led you to approach him?

W Just-

CA On the subject of donating?

W Just the subject of fundraising, yes, to see if he wanted-

40 CA What led you to do that? Why did you approach him?

W Because they were fundraising for the campaign.

CA How did his name crop up?

W I don't recall.

50 CA Well, something must have led you to seek him out, as you apparently did?

W Well, I know him. I know him well and I know, from years back, he was trying to improve relationships with the government, so-

CA Were you asked by anyone to approach him and see if he would be interested?

W The Mayor - he might have asked me or I might have suggested it. I don't recall.

CA Did the Mayor, for example, raise his name and suggest that you speak with him about it?

W Well, that's what I'm saying. He may have or it might have been me suggesting it.

10 CA You can't remember?

W I can't recall.

CA In any event, you had some discussion with him on the subject of donating?

W Yes.

20 CA Was a figure mentioned?

W Yes.

CA What figure of potential donation was mentioned?

W The figure that Rob paid.

CA I think it was \$20,000?

W Yes, correct.

30 CA Is that the amount that was referred to in your discussion?

W Yes.

CA Well, how did it advance from there in terms of Moreton Futures Trust?

W Well, Rob agreed to give the money. At that stage, I hadn't heard of the Moreton Futures Trust. Then when Rob asked, you know, "How does it work and who do I give the money to?", I then went and asked.

40 CA Asked who?

W The Mayor, and he said, "To the Moreton Bay Futures Trust", so I gave-

CA Was that the first you had heard of it?

W Yes.

50 CA At that time?

W Yes.

CA What did he explain in terms of how the payment should be made?

- W Nothing really, other than make the cheque to Moreton Bay Futures Trust. He didn't really delve into what the trust was, how it worked or anything like that.
- CA Were you curious?
- W Not really. The only part of me that was curious was making sure that I could give Rob the answers that he needed to make the donation.
- 10 CA He wanted to know who to make the cheque out to; is that right?
- W Correct.
- CA So you got this information from the Mayor that it should be made to Moreton Futures Trust?
- W Yes.
- 20 CA Did you go back to Mr COMISKEY with that information?
- W Yes.
- CA Did he query that as to, "Why do it this way?"
- W Yes, he did. He just wanted to make sure, you know, that that money was going to help the Mayor's campaign and probably a couple of other councillors that he endorsed or liked, or whatever, and so he had some questions about that, but-
- 30 CA What were you able to tell him?
- W Not much.
- CA Well, did you satisfy his query?
- W Well, I must have, because he paid it. He paid the cheque to Moreton Bay Futures Trust.
- 40 CA You must have had some information to give him because he asked you about it?
- W Basically, what I just said. I told him it's a trust fund. I think I said that, you know, all the councillors can access it, but it's going to help the Mayor's fund, and probably all the funds in it will be exhausted by the election is over and there's probably not going to be much change.
- CA Where did you get that information from to be able to pass it on to him?
- W From the Mayor.
- 50 CA So you did ask the Mayor about the operation of the Moreton Futures Trust?
- W No, not the operation of it.
- CA I see.

- W Oh, well, possibly. He was reasonably vague in his explanation, like I said, so I just told Rob what I got told, which wasn't much, and moved on.
- CA You passed that on to Mr COMISKEY?
- W Yes.
- 10 CA He was happy with what you told him?
- W Yes.
- CA Did he proceed to make the donation?
- W Yes.
- CA In what form? Was it a cheque?
- 20 W Yes.
- CA What happened to the cheque? Did you receive it?
- W Yes.
- CA What did you do with it?
- W I gave it to the Mayor.
- 30 CA Do you recall the occasion on which you did that?
- W I don't know the date.
- CA but where and how?
- W I was driving back after I collected it from the COMISKEY office and met the Mayor on Bracken Ridge Road at a - it's like a sports centre. I pulled over there and gave it to him.
- 40 CA Did you see the cheque?
- W Yes.
- CA Was it in fact made out to Moreton Futures Trust for \$20,000?
- W Yes.
- CA And you gave it to the Mayor?
- 50 W Yes.
- CA Did he say anything about it, what he was going to do with it?
- W No.
- CA Do you know of a man called Kirby LEEKE?

- W Only from reading about this.
- CA Do you know him personally?
- W No.
- CA Have you ever spoken to him that you know of?
- 10 W No.
- CA You haven't, for the purpose of any arrangement surrounding this cheque, spoken to him?
- W Don't know him.
- CA Dr John RYAN?
- W Don't know him.
- 20 CA That gentleman?
- W Heard of that name just by reading about this.
- CA You didn't know him or you didn't even know that name at the time we're speaking of?
- W No.
- 30 CA Did you have any involvement in either seeking money or the arrangements to pay money from other donors to the Mayor's fund?
- W No.
- CA No?
- W No.
- 40 CA This arrangement that you've spoken of by way of receiving a cheque and having some discussion with Mr COMISKEY, was he the only donor with whom you had such discussions?
- W Yes.
- CA I'll just ask you this: would it be correct or incorrect for anyone to describe you as the campaign manager for Mr SUTHERLAND?
- W Incorrect.
- 50 CA Do you know a developer called David TRASK?
- W Know of him.
- CA You've never met him?
- W Might have met him once, but no.

CA I take it, then, that you had no conversation with him about the Mayor's campaign or fundraising?

W None.

CA Either from him or through him?

W No-one else.

10 CA Do you know anything about the means by which invoices for the Mayor's campaign expenses were paid?

W No.

CA It was not your area?

W No, I didn't do it.

20 CA Did you glean any information about that?

W I'm assuming probably Gayle might have paid them, or the Mayor. I don't know. I didn't see anyone pay any bills.

CA That is Mr DIXON's evidence, Commissioner.

PO Thank you. Is anyone representing this witness? Thank you, Mr DIXON, you are excused.