



Outstanding correspondence

To

The A.B. Stateline program's

Jessica van Vonderen

Northern Belle Pty Ltd

Cairns first Licensed Parlour Est. 2006

01-08-09

Dear Jessica,

In response to the program broadcast on "Stateline" Friday
17-07-09 (you are to be complimented)

I am putting to you the correspondence I had with the Crime and
Misconduct commission as of current. (As per attachment)

Please refer to www.aartbrons.com, and in particular to read the "latest
letter to Val Schier Mayor of Cairns Regional Council" at the bottom of
the site and or click onto Mayor Val Schier's picture.

Having done so, I am asking you for further advice as where to go from
here, as I have run out of ideas. (but to come on your program to explain
myself)

Thanking you for your time

Kind regards
Aart Brons.

11 Cava Close Bungalow CAIRNS 4870 QLD AUSTRALIA
Ph 07 4033 5955 Fax 07 4054 3976
www.northernbelle.com.au

100

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Stateline Queensland

[This is the print version of story <http://www.abc.net.au/stateline/qld/content/2006/s2629419.htm>]

Transcript

Government Fallout

Broadcast: 17/07/2009

Reporter: JESSICA van VONDEREN

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JESSICA van VONDEREN: The Nuttall case has re-ignited an even broader debate about the relationships between Government and business. The links are well-established. Former politicians become consultants who lobby Governments on behalf of private firms. Businesses make donations to political parties. And they buy expensive seats at dinner tables to catch the ear of those in positions of power. All of those things are legal but does that make them right? In Queensland, an Integrity Commissioner can advise Ministers and senior public servants on potential conflicts of interest and other questions of ethics. That was Gary Crooke's job for five years, before he retired this month. I spoke with him earlier today.

(JESSICA van VONDEREN SPEAKS WITH GARY CROOKE)

JESSICA van VONDEREN: You were a Senior Counsel assisting the Fitzgerald Inquiry. Are you surprised two decades on, to see a corruption trial like the Gordon Nuttall one play out in Queensland?

GARY CROOKE, FORMER INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER: I don't think you'd say you were surprised. I think combating corruption is all about being eternally vigilant and the fact that the systems of public administration, the CMC, has been alert enough to as it were, bring this issue to light and have it brought before the courts is something that shows that our public administration system has organs that are doing their job and the fact that there is still corruption there is perhaps no more and no less than human nature and that's why you've got to be vigilant. It's always going to be about.

JESSICA van VONDEREN: You've just ended a five year term as the Integrity Commissioner how much of a hit does the public's faith or the public's confidence in the political system take when there's been a case like this one?

GARY CROOKE: Yes that's a very interesting question. The whole foundation of the Integrity Commissioner when the Parliament passed legislation to create the office was in

18/07/2009 12:19

effect to endeavour to try to improve the image of politicians in the public eye. It was recognised that the image was a very bad one. Now when something like this happens it is a very shattering blow for the image of the politicians. It's a sad fact that although it might only be an individual, the team suffers.

JESSICA van VONDEREN: So is there a real problem with integrity in Government or just a perceived one?

GARY CROOKE: Well again, perception is reality. I think this is what's lost sight of in many circumstances and one of the major difficulties or issues in current public administration; it's the community that calls the tune in all of this and that's what's often overlooked by those in authority. It's not for an individual to pull him or herself up by ethical boot strings that they claim to have, to say well I didn't think there was anything wrong with that. The true test has got to be whether the reasonable member of the community properly informed thinks that that is acceptable conduct.

JESSICA van VONDEREN: The Nuttall case has sparked calls for a broader, more general inquiry into business links with Government. Would that be a good idea?

GARY CROOKE: I think it would be a good idea. Time passes and relationships grow and practices grow. And just because a practice has grown or is in existence, it doesn't mean that it's right. There is a need to resort to fundamental principles and has time has passed the relationship between politicians and business people has developed. It may have developed in a completely acceptable way in many instances. There may be instances where it does need close scrutiny and it would be a good idea, just calmly, not in the sense of crisis, but from the point of view of public administration, to look at what are the proper boundaries and areas of regulation that are needed.

JESSICA van VONDEREN: What about this issue of pay for access to politicians. For example, the Liberal National Party has their annual conference this weekend and business people are paying more than \$3,000 to attend as corporate observers. Labor has similar programs in place. Do you have a problem with those?

GARY CROOKE, FORMER INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER: I certainly do. I think it is just so fundamentally wrong that it is quite disappointing that those holding public office are prepared to proceed with it, notwithstanding what I perceive to be outrage by the community. You see, when one is elected to a public office you take a position of trusteeship. You have to husband the capital that is yours by reason of the office that you hold to be used for the good of the community and it's not yours to deal with for any sectional interest, for the benefit of any sectional interest, and a political party is a sectional interest. They're making a profit out of some implied promise or expectation that is there that somebody is paying money for something unspecified, that even as Mr Nuttall now famously has said, nothing is for nothing.

JESSICA van VONDEREN: Is there something you'd like to see being done to improve integrity in Government, that isn't being done now?

GARY CROOKE: I'd like to see the public take a much more active part in what is going on. To recognise that they are the ones that set the standards as to what's expected of their elected representatives and to make it quite clear that certain conduct is not acceptable and

that's what our democratic system is all about.

JESSICA van VONDEREN: How can they do that?

GARY CROOKE: They can do that by first of all hopefully being objectively informed by the media as to what is going on and I mean objectively because that's most important. It's only when the public is properly informed that they can make a proper decision and they can do it by expressing their outrage and by communication with the media, on talk back shows, just to make themselves heard that they don't expect this from the people whom they have elected to be trustees for them.

JESSICA van VONDEREN: Gary Crooke, thank you.

GARY CROOKE: OK.

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