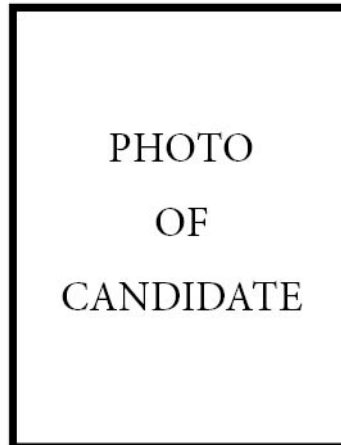


# *media release #7*



## **GREG McMAHON**

**INDEPENDENT SENATE CANDIDATE for QUEENSLAND  
FEDERAL ELECTION - 2 JULY 2016**

---

### **How good, or not, is our system of inquiries?**

Independent Senate candidate for Queensland, Greg McMahon, said today the failures by ombudsman offices, crime commissions and other watchdog authorities to respond properly, thoroughly and impartially to many disclosures made by whistleblowers in the public sector was a matter of concern for all Queenslanders.

He said these failures had brought commissions of inquiry and Senate inquiries to the frontline of efforts to contain wrongdoing.

“The effectiveness of such inquiries is therefore critical to the identification of such wrongdoing and to the removal of wrongdoing from public sector agencies,” Mr McMahon said.

“There are factors which, it appears, may be undermining or decreasing the effectiveness of these justice processes.

“However, the Senate, as the Grand Inquest of the Nation, is the body to review these processes, so as to enable the best of our instruments for investigation to produce better results.”

Mr McMahon said commissions of Inquiry have been subject to concerns about whether or not perceived conflicts of interest may be held by appointments to those Commissions.

“And concerns have been held about terms of reference given to some inquiries, and whether those terms should be expanded if the Inquiry should identify related wrongs not covered by the initial terms.

“The relative roles and responsibilities of commissioners and counsel assisting, and the processes followed with respect to submissions and the disclosures made in them, are aspects of inquiries that merit exploration, so as to determine good practices.

“Some inquiries achieve, others don’t,” Mr McMahon said.

“The Senate needs to document why this is so.”

Mr McMahon said a further obstacle that can arise is how the methods of lawyers and those of scientists and engineers are integrated when dealing with technical issues. In this regard, expectations held by the public as to the approaches taken by technical professionals and professional bodies, in providing expert evidence and expert opinion to commissions of inquiry, should be derived by the Senate.

Senate Inquiries, and the processes followed by its Committees, might also be revisited by the Senate,” he said.

“The standing of the Senate as the Grand Inquest of the Nation will always be judged by the Senate’s ability to consider matters on their merits, rather than by considerations mainly of the politics involved.”

Another area for assessment of the performance of Senate inquiries was the relative influence of lobby groups and government agencies (including watchdogs) on outcomes, versus the influence of those affected by the issue involved, Mr McMahon said.

“Any need for the Senate or its Committees to ask hard questions of, or make adverse findings against entities with power, such as global corporations, media empires, Defence Chiefs and/or principal enforcement agencies, is a task for which the Senate needs to assert its position as the Grand Inquest of the Nation, and to do so without fear or favour, and on a consistent and reliable basis, he said.

“If the Senate is given false information, or witnesses suffer suspected retaliation, the Senate’s decision on whether or not to take suspected offenders to investigation and prosecution needs to be supported by well-prepared processes rather than discouraged by a lack of such processes.

“The decision by Senate Committees on some inquiries, not to inquire into individual cases, no doubt reflects time and resource issues for the Senate and its Senators.

“But the Senate could still be more effective in these situations, were it to interest itself in what are termed ‘domino’ issues or documents, where these exist.

“These ‘domino’ issues in many wrongdoing and whistleblowing situations can be instructive by themselves, and shining a light on just one issue may dissolve most other matters involved in the total disclosure.

Addressing, with the whistleblower’s consent, the domino issue alone, may support a recommendation for a proper inquiry by proper authorities,” Mr McMahon said.

“Examples include an undisclosed document, an uncalled witness, or a mis-statement of the law, which ombudsman offices, crime commissions and other watchdog authorities may be refusing to address.”

**12 June 2016**

**Home/Business: 22 Kersley Road, Kenmore, QLD, 4069**

**Mobile: 0411 757 231**

**Email: [mcmahonqueensland@gmail.com](mailto:mcmahonqueensland@gmail.com)**

**Webpage: <http://www.gregmcmahon.com.au/>**