

WINE NEWS

MP Rob Pyne 'coward' for attack on Ipswich Mayor, councillors over 'private jets, travel'

By Melanie Vujkovic and staff

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Cairns MP Rob Pyne has defended himself amid a storm of criticism after he tabled a document in Parliament accusing former Ipswich mayor Paul Pisasale of corruption and misconduct.

The unproven allegations, made under parliamentary privilege on Wednesday, questioned dealings by Mr Pisasale, other councillors and the transparency of council-owned development companies.

The four-page document said "it was unknown if the board took director's fees", but claimed members had "travelled overseas under the guise of these companies, sometimes hiring private jets".

Claims Mr Pisasale had inappropriately used council resources for personal reasons were also levelled.

Mr Pyne told ABC Radio Brisbane the allegations were true, but did not repeat them on air without parliamentary privilege protecting him from potential defamation action.

"The people who've provided this information are senior figures from within the Ipswich community, and much of the information is verifiable simply by looking at it," he said on Thursday morning.

Mr Pyne said while his claims were truthful, some alleged actions of the Ipswich figures were not illegal under Queensland law.

The Cairns MP, who said he wanted stronger anti-corruption laws and the state's Crime and Corruption Commission to be given broader investigative powers, said he would not resign if the allegations were found to be untrue.

Acting Mayor angered by Pyne's claims



PHOTO: Mr Pyne submitted a list of serious accusations in Parliament on Wednesday. (ABC News: Giulio Saggini)

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Key points:

- Rob Pyne uses parliamentary privilege to level accusations against former Ipswich mayor Paul Pisasale and other councillors
- Acting mayor Paul Tully calls for Mr Pyne to apologise
- Local Government Association Queensland accuses Mr Pyne of abusing parliamentary privilege



PHOTO: Former Ipswich Mayor Paul Pisasale was the main figure named in explosive documents tabled by Mr Pyne. (AAP: Dan Peled)

Acting Ipswich Mayor Paul Tully criticised the document tabled by Mr Pyne, which contained claims against former mayor Mr Pisasale, who resigned suddenly last week, and other members of council.

Cr Tully said none of it was substantiated.

"I'm very disappointed that he's turned this into a personal attack on Ipswich councillors and their families," he said.

"He should check his facts before he goes into Parliament, into the coward's castle, and make these false allegations."

Cr Tully said he would be calling on Mr Pyne to apologise for using parliamentary privilege to make the allegations.

"It is very disappointing that a member of Parliament has stooped to these depths, with all of these falsehoods in the Parliament," he said.

"I am very, very distressed by what he has done, and I will prove that he is wrong, and I will be calling on the speaker of the Queensland Parliament, to get him to apologise."

Cr Tully said all council-owned companies were examined by the Auditor-General.

"There is full transparency. We report to the Ipswich City Council on a regular basis during the year," he said.

'He has tarred us all with the same brush'

Cr Andrew Antenolli said members of the board were not remunerated and their contributions to the company were associated with their duties as a councillor.

"I do agree that there could be more transparency with the community, but we're bound by company law and commercial in confidence agreements," he said.

"I think he [Pyne] has taken liberty with the issue of one person being under suspicion, and has tarred us all with the same brush."

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A very emotional [Acting Mayor Paul Tully](#) has called for Queensland [Rob Pyne: Putting Cairns First](#) to resign after he used parliamentary privilege to make serious allegations about the councillor and his wife.

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Local Government Association Queensland CEO Greg Hallam accused Mr Pyne of abusing parliamentary privilege.

"We're quite honestly disgusted," he told ABC Radio Brisbane.

"This is a drummed up, specious campaign to have an inquiry into all local government. It's just a nonsense."

Mr Hallam said he would not comment specifically on the Pisasale claims because of an ongoing CCC investigation.

But he said Mr Pyne had a "long history" of making unproven statements under parliamentary privilege.

Mr Pisasale resigned suddenly last week amid revelations the Crime and Corruption Commission was investigating how and why he was carrying \$50,000 cash when stopped at a Melbourne domestic airport last month.

Mr Pisasale cited health reasons for his resignation.

He was contacted for comment but could not be reached.

Topics: state-parliament, parliament, local-government, government-and-politics, ipswich-4305, brisbane-4000, qld

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Contact [Melanie Vuikovic](#)



PHOTO: Mr Pisasale resigned early last week. (ABC News: Josh Bavas)