



Speech by

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DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTION CANDIDATES

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (6.29 p.m.): I rise this evening to support the Premier's Draft Code of Conduct for Election Candidates. When one looks through the code, one sees that it certainly contains a wide variety of very good reforms which I would like to see all candidates—including current members who are already endorsed and ready to go to the next election—abide by.

I support this draft code of conduct entirely. However, I am not sure that the National Party are capable of following through on it if they do support this bill. I would like to illustrate that point. For example, when the member for Southern Downs took over the leadership of the opposition in February this year, he made a pledge to pursue positive politics. In a press release titled 'Springborg's new positive politics to end scaremongering' he said—

The public is demanding new standards from their elected leaders. And I intend to ensure all my MPs and my own National Party mirror these standards.

He went to say—

It's time to clean up the way political parties present themselves and a new National Party will drive that agenda.

However, even in this press release the newly elected Opposition Leader could not resist a dig at the Premier, accusing him of slurring opponents and whipping up fear and scaremongering when he was in opposition.

All that aside, the member for Southern Downs pledged himself to make a change, to be more positive and not to fall into the trap of criticising just for the sake of criticising. Even at the last sitting he spoke to his bill about honesty in campaigning, yet we have not seen him honestly pursue his first promise as Opposition Leader.

I checked the web site, so let us have a look at the record. Did the Opposition Leader congratulate the government on its innovative education and training reforms? No. Did the opposition have praise for the extra \$290 million for Disability Services announced in this year's budget? No. Did the Opposition Leader even give credit for tougher sentencing options for paedophiles? No. Over 200 press releases have been pumped out by the Opposition Leader and only one of them commented favourably about government policy or programs. In fact, only 11 per cent of them had a positive nature. So much for positive politics! Almost 90 per cent of his press releases have taken the easy option—criticise, carp, moan and whinge without offering sensible alternatives.

The member for Southern Downs even took time out to criticise the United Nations, which is probably just a rite of passage. On the positive side, he did praise Warwick Cheese for winning a national award. The most amusing press release that I have seen come out of the opposition was the spin that they tried to put on why the Queensland Nationals are still opposed to the sale of Telstra even though their federal members have agreed to sell out their rural constituency.

The next most prolific press release member of the opposition is the member for Maroochydore. Does any member want to guess how many positive press releases the member for Maroochydore has put out?

A government member: Nil.

Ms MALE: Exactly—none, zero. She has a 100 per cent negative record. Maybe that is why people from the Maroochydore electorate contact my office asking for additional help with positive initiatives that they want to get started. In fact, most of the opposition have a 100 per cent record as serial complainers. The only member who was a bit different was the member for Keppel, who is voluntarily leaving at the next election. He was negative only 84 per cent of the time. It is a very sad total when one considers that there was a very public pledge from their leader about being positive and following through. These are the sorts of things we see in the draft code of conduct. It talks about candidates saying the right thing, being honest in their representations to the electorate and following through on that.

There are many positive things to say about our electorates. In fact, I put out a brochure last month which detailed over 50 initiatives that the government has followed through within my electorate alone. Since that time we have also had the education and training reform package. In my electorate a youth action plan has been initiated. This Youth Action Plan covers the two trial sites of the education districts in my electorate. We are going to see very good communication between schools, employers and young people to make sure that they have positive plans to work through. That is a positive reform. The member for Maroochydore actually attended the launch of that action plan and I have not seen anything come out of that.

There is a prep school trial at Maleny State School, the antihooning legislation and the confiscation of cars, further job creation funding, expanded domestic violence services and so on. There are many positive things happening in my electorate and they stem from the positive initiatives of the government, but we have not heard about this.

The Leader of the Opposition has not even used his negativity to improve the lot of Queenslanders. Where was he when we needed his support to get the federal government to put extra funds on the table for public hospitals?

A government member: They were missing in action.

Ms MALE: They were missing in action. They are not even using their negativity in a positive way to help Queenslanders. They are not following through on all of this. I know it is difficult to be positive when one is in opposition, but it is certainly what the members opposite need to do.

In the last few parliamentary sittings we have seen some of the worst guttersniping from the opposition benches ever. Few members will forget the shameful attacks on the Premier about paedophilia, the false claims—and I emphasise false claims—regarding his family's business interests, and the denigration of the 25 extra SCAN officers being employed by the Department of Families. It is interesting to see the members opposite support this code. I look forward to them actually applying it to themselves, but so far what I have seen in this parliament is the Nationals claiming honesty but practising dishonesty. This code of conduct is about changing that.

I think the member for Southern Downs has led with his jaw about being positive and he has yet to show that he has embraced this philosophy at all. It is time that the National Party leader started leading by example and showed that he does not have a glass jaw. He needs to stand up for this code of conduct that the Premier has put forward. It is all about honesty in politics. It is about honesty on the part of candidates—which is what we all are. I think the members opposite need to follow up their words with actions. I commend the Premier's draft code of conduct to the House.