



Speech by

**JULIE ATTWOOD**

**Member for MOUNT OMMANEY**

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Hansard 9 September 2003

### **DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTION CANDIDATES**

**Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.50 p.m.): I rise to support the Code of Conduct for Election Candidates. It is important that candidates maintain appropriate behaviour during an election campaign. As the chairperson of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee, I submitted a report in February 2003 to the parliament on mechanisms by which the Code of Ethical Standards for Members of the Queensland Legislative Assembly can be brought to the attention of all candidates nominating for election to the Queensland parliament. The MEPPC believed that there was a need for all candidates for election to the Legislative Assembly to be aware of the Code of Ethical Standards, particularly as the members' interests resolution adopted by the Assembly on 25 May 1999 requires newly elected members to declare their registrable interests at the date of their election.

The committee met with the Queensland Electoral Commissioner, Mr R. L. Longland, to discuss mechanisms to do this. The committee and the Electoral Commissioner agreed to three key mechanisms by which the code can be brought to the attention of candidates, and I wish to draw these mechanisms to the attention of the Assembly today. A brief summary of the Code of Ethical Standards: Queensland Legislative Assembly, including information about how to obtain a copy of the code, has been included in the Electoral Commission's guide for candidates. We have also incorporated a statement suggesting that candidates familiarise themselves with the Code of Ethical Standards and include the web site reference for the code.

The Premier's Code of Conduct for Election Candidates is aspirational and takes this a step further in the interests of strengthening the public's trust and confidence in the democratic election process. It seeks to guide and regulate the behaviour of individual candidates. We have an obligation to ensure that there is integrity in our electoral system.

The code is voluntary apart from the inclusion and reference to the various laws in part (e). However, it must be noted that the onus is on any candidate running in a state election to ensure that they act with integrity and behave in a manner that is fair and reasonable towards other candidates during a campaign. I think we hear too much negative publicity about the way that candidates for election conduct themselves. It is about time we endeavour to change this perception, which is usually typical of only a few. It is vital that in a representative democracy the public have confidence in the integrity of their elected representatives. I commend the code of conduct to the House.