



Speech by

## Stuart Copeland

MEMBER FOR CUNNINGHAM

Hansard Wednesday, 10 May 2006

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### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr COPELAND** (Cunningham—NPA) (6.13 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and strongly oppose the amendment moved by the Premier. I have long lamented the fact that the state of Queensland is being run as a spin doctor state. It is being run by public relations froth and bubble. It has been run like that for eight years since this Premier was elected. I well recall about three years ago I was having a conversation with a well-respected journalist who had been involved in Queensland politics for a very long time who said to me, 'Stuart, you know why Peter Beattie was so disliked by the Goss government and wasn't promoted into cabinet for so long? You know why he was kept on the backbench for so long? It's because they knew the only thing he was good at was self-promotion and public relations. He didn't have any policy background, he didn't have any ability in policy, but he had an excellent ability in public relations and advertising.' That journalist was absolutely spot on. That is what this Premier is so good at, that is what this government is so good at: it is advertising and public relations spin doctoring.

Everyone in Queensland is learning that. Everyone in Queensland is now seeing through the froth and bubble and charades that we see on a daily basis from this government. The only response to every single crisis, every single problem, every single challenge facing this government in this state—all of which, through neglect, mismanagement and inaction, it has created—is through public relations. We measure the response by the size of the stack of press releases that this government puts out.

Just today I was talking to one of the newspaper reporters in my electorate and they received six faxes of the exact same press release from Paul Lucas, the minister for transport. That is the number of press releases this government can put out.

The defences put up by the speakers for the government tonight are absolutely laughable. The Premier says it is all about recruitment of doctors. That is rubbish. Everyone knows it is rubbish.

**Mrs Carryn Sullivan** interjected.

**Mr COPELAND:** It is about protecting their political brand.

**Mrs Carryn Sullivan** interjected.

**Mr COPELAND:** It is about political self-promotion in relation to what a great job they are doing. The member for Pumicestone, who is continually interjecting, actually admitted that it had to advertise to get its side of the story across because 'no-one was listening to us. No-one believes us. The media wouldn't report the real story. The media don't know what's going on so we had to advertise.' That is exactly what she said and that is what the Premier has said: 'We have to advertise because the naughty media just won't run our line.' Is that not a shame? Is it not a shame that no-one believes this government any more. When their lips are moving we know that there is something going wrong. That is what is going on and that is why we see this whole swag of advertising.

The member for Hervey Bay says, 'We want to advertise to get a new boat ramp.' Of course advertise for tenders, that is normal procedure for procuring those investment projects. Then the member for Greenslopes says it has to spend money on tourism. Tourism spending under this government has decreased, yet he is putting that forward in defence of the advertising program.

It is political advertising. Everyone who sees it on TV, reads it in the newspaper or hears it on radio knows it is political advertising. Last week someone said to me, 'Are we coming up to an election, are we, because that is what it feels like with all these government ads on TV and radio.' That is what it is all about. It is not about trying to recruit doctors. The recruitment of doctors is through the careers section. One does not recruit doctors through big, glossy, feel-good ads.

I will go through some of the statements in the amendment moved by the Premier because it is absolutely laughable. The first point—

... notes this strategy has contributed to the employment of 272 extra doctors, 413 extra allied health professionals and 1,082 extra nurses.

It does not say anything about the 2,462 doctors that have left the system because of the appalling culture.

Notes that Peter Forster, in his review of Queensland's health systems, stated in his report:- 'It will be important that Queensland Health can demonstrate quickly to the community that it serves them well so that the adverse effect on its reputation can begin to be repaired. Queensland Health must restore its reputation with the community and with its staff or this may have dire consequences for its ability to continue to recruit staff ...'

It is about deeds, not words. It is about the culture within Queensland Health, not the advertising saying how good Queensland Health is to work for. Because people know that it is not a good place to work. People know they do not want to apply for jobs there and that is a direct responsibility of this government. It has created the problem, it has created the poisonous culture and now it is trying to react in a political way to save its political backsides when it comes to the next election facing Queensland. This is purely political advertising and the government stands condemned for its arrogance in treating Queenslanders this way.