



Speech by

# John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard Wednesday, 19 August 2009

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## CRIMINAL CODE (HONESTY AND INTEGRITY IN PARLIAMENT) AMENDMENT BILL

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.31 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Today I introduce a bill into this House that, if passed, will restore true honesty and integrity into the Queensland parliament. In 2006 the integrity and honesty that was expected of members of parliament was destroyed by the government when it used its numbers to effectively decriminalise the offence of providing false evidence to parliament or its committees. The removal of this offence was an open invitation to legalised deceit and mistruths and the final act in helping one of its own whose actions had amounted to misleading an estimates hearing. Every member of parliament is elected on the basis of honesty, integrity and standing up for the truth. The need to ensure accountability in parliament is a foundation of our system of government, yet this has been missing from this parliament for some years. Honesty and integrity should be in the DNA of every decent politician, but allowing a politician to deliberately provide false evidence to parliament or one of its committees destroys the very foundations of a democracy.

The need for codification of criminal offences concerning parliamentarians was raised by Daniel Morgan in the *Australian Law Journal* in 2008 where, in concluding, he wrote—

In terms of 'best practice' legislative drafting, the approach of Sir Samuel Griffith in drafting the Criminal Code provisions to include parliamentary offences was almost a century ahead of its time.

Given the time constraints, I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I am introducing amendments to the Criminal Code 1899 and Parliament of Queensland Act 2001.

The amendment to the Criminal Code will introduce the offence of providing false evidence to Parliament. This offence is a crime and carries a maximum 7 years imprisonment. The community should be able to expect that as members of this House who sit in parliament or before one of its committees they do so knowing that they will be required to tell the truth and be honest. The people of Queensland deserve no less.

We so often hear members of this government harp on about separation of powers, but when they removed this law they breached that separation of powers, by making the parliament judge and jury.

The amendment to the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 amends s47 to make it clear acts amounting to both contempt of parliament and providing false evidence under the Criminal Code, the code offence should be proceeded with.

This Bill makes it clear that any member in this House and anyone else appearing before it, if you deliberately provide false evidence to parliament or one of its committees you commit a crime.

The Queensland Opposition take honesty and integrity in parliament very seriously and by all our members supporting this Bill they have put themselves on notice and are willing to continue to be honest and forthright without fear.

It's now up to this Premier and her Government to support this Bill and show that they too will not tolerate providing false evidence to parliament by its members and the only way to show real honesty and integrity is to support this Bill.

This is a test of honesty, and step closer to restoring faith in the process of parliament and a vital step to proving to the people of Queensland the truth truly does exist in parliament.

I commend the Bill to the House.