



Speech by

# Lawrence Springborg

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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## INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.36 am): No amount of spin and deception and promises to this parliament by a government and a Premier which apparently have undergone a conversion on the road to political annihilation is going to save them from the wrath of the people of Queensland who were deliberately misled and deliberately deceived at the last state election. Make no mistake about it: when you look at the Premier and those members opposite who owe their very existence in this parliament to political deception and misleading, the people of Queensland are never, ever going to forget or forgive them for that level of dishonesty.

If the Premier is absolutely committed to restoring integrity to the electoral system in Queensland, then the Premier should make a commitment to tell the truth at elections. That is the fundamental problem which is underpinning the lack of faith and confidence in the electorate at the moment. This Premier went to the last state election and deliberately deceived the people of Queensland by not telling them of secret plans to introduce a fuel tax and to privatise so much of public owned infrastructure in Queensland. That is the fundamental problem.

This Premier has been dragged kicking and screaming to this conversion also by the words of Tony Fitzgerald in recent times. To add insult to injury, this government, through this Premier, wants to enshrine the natural political advantage of the Labor Party in Queensland. Make no mistake about it: the reforms that the Premier is talking about today selectively enshrine the natural political advantage of the Labor Party by disadvantaging its political opponents, whether it be the opposition, or Independents or anybody else who wants to step up to the mark in Queensland. How does it do that? It does that by enshrining the advantage that comes from Labor Holdings and the massive war chest that it has there, and not restricting the money that can go in there or come out of that.

The Premier has weaselled around this today because she has no intention of making amendments. Parallel campaigns are in no way going to be dealt with. What did we see at the last state election? We saw the Queensland Council of Unions contribute \$335,000 in parallel campaigning, the Queensland Teachers Union contribute \$73,000 in parallel campaigning and the Queensland Public Sector Union contribute \$222,000 in parallel campaigning to the Labor Party. That does not include the direct donations from the unions of \$2.8 million, of which \$220,000 went into a hopelessly unsuccessful attempt by the CFMEU to unseat the member for Mirani. So we see the natural advantage that actually goes to the Labor Party from the unions and its courtier of mates who are very happy to go out there and run parallel campaigns. That will be enshrined by the laws that Anna Bligh is going to introduce in this parliament.

There are no other organisations that run parallel campaigns and as descriptively go out there and advocate a vote for a particular political party like the unions do. The other parallel campaigns which are generally run are benign and do not even advocate a vote for a particular political party and therefore would not even be noticed. If we seek to put a cap of \$1,000 on these donations it in no way affects the natural political advantage of the Labor Party because the millions of dollars that would otherwise have gone into direct donations will go into parallel campaigns that will say exactly the same thing. There will be millions of dollars.

This is very similar to what we saw during the last federal election where the union movement spent some \$28 million in parallel campaigning supporting the Rudd government. This is about enshrining advantage. If the government was serious it would take on board what the LNP has been suggesting—that is, a cap on election expenditure. That levels the playing field in Queensland. Those opposite do not level the playing field in elections when they seek to restrict the donations and the availability of resources to one side of politics and enhance and enshrine their natural advantage.

This is not about accountability. This is about the Labor Party and a desperate rearguard action to try to keep themselves in government in perpetuity in Queensland. Make no mistake about it. It cannot do it honestly. It cannot do it by taking a policy platform to the people of Queensland. It has to do it deceptively in this most disadvantageous manner. That is what this is about today.

*(Time expired)*