



Speech by

# Hon. Fiona Simpson


**MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE**

Hansard Tuesday, 29 May 2012

---

## **SPEAKER'S STATEMENT**

### **Leader of the Opposition, Reflections on the Chair**

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, in Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee report No. 90, the committee stated—

In Queensland, and in many other jurisdictions based on the Westminster system, it is a recognised principle of parliamentary privilege that the character or actions of the Chair (the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Acting Speakers) may not be criticised by any member except on a substantive motion. There are numerous authorities that support this principle. The principle is based on respect for the institution of Parliament—the Chair being the embodiment of the power, authority and integrity of the Parliament.

Reflections on the Chair may undermine the authority of Parliament by diminishing the respect due to the institution of Parliament. The United Kingdom House of Commons has traditionally regarded any reflections on the Speaker as a breach of privilege and contempt of Parliament.

The committee's report was dealing with an allegation that a member had reflected on the Speaker in media outside the Assembly. The committee unanimously found contempt against the member.

A statement by the Leader of the Opposition on ABC News last night has come to my attention. In the news report there was a clear inference from the Leader of the Opposition that the Speaker did not uphold order enough in the first sitting week. I wish to make it very clear to all members on both sides of the House that I am not going to allow the Speaker, or any member acting as Speaker, to be criticised either inside the Assembly or outside in the media. I endorse a comment made by Deputy Speaker English during a ruling on 28 February 2008 that—

Not every criticism will amount to a reflection. Not every reflection will warrant action. At the end of the day, it is a matter of balancing freedom of speech with the nature of the statements.

However, I believe that the Leader of the Opposition's comment is a reflection on the chair and I would ask her to apologise for those statements. If the Leader of the Opposition feels that she cannot apologise, I will have no choice but to refer the matter to the Ethics Committee.

**Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.36 am): Madam Speaker, there was no reflection on the chair at all and I apologise to the House.

**Madam SPEAKER:** I would ask that the Leader of the Opposition's comments are unqualified in that regard.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They are completely unqualified.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Thank you.