



Speech by


**Steve Davies**

**MEMBER FOR CAPALABA**

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## **CRIMINAL LAW (FALSE EVIDENCE BEFORE PARLIAMENT) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (6.14 pm): It is with pride I rise to again speak of this government's achievements. Yet another LNP promise has been kept. This adds to the government's already outstanding record of delivery. The Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill 2012 and the re-enactment of section 57 which makes it illegal to give false evidence before parliament is another link in the chain that this government is creating to ensure that Queensland is governed in a transparent manner that would allow the good work of this government to be seen by all. In fact, this bill is another piece in our five pledges to Queensland. Those pledges are to grow a four-pillar economy, lower the cost of living for families by cutting waste, deliver better infrastructure and better planning, revitalise front-line services and, finally, restore accountability to government, which this bill actually does.

The Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill 2012 plays an important role in keeping accountability high within parliament. The LNP is committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity and delivering the standards that the community expects and is entitled to. Although the instances that prompt the re-enactment of section 57 are rare, it is important that the faith of our legislative arm is never questioned. The re-enactment of section 57 is a crucial component of the LNP's program to bring accountability to this House. The maximum penalty for conviction being seven years is evidence of this tough stance. The minor changes to the wording of the original section reflect modern drafting practices.

I am sure that the members of this chamber will be well versed in why this amendment is important. It was only a few years ago now that dark shadows were cast across the legitimacy of the Queensland parliament with revelations that the former health minister had lied to Estimates Committee D. As if this betrayal of confidence of the public was not enough, the then Labor government moved to label this act as acceptable by becoming the judge and jury in the case by legislating themselves as the sole authority. By doing so they became complicit in the deception of the Queensland people; a trait, it would seem, Queensland Labor share with their federal counterpart. The judiciary unfettered is a vital institution. Without it suspicion will always thrive. By allowing the court to deal with any claims of misconduct, Queenslanders can be sure that political interference will be a thing of the past and will guard against perceptions of the parliament acting as magistrates in matters that concern public interest. It is far better to leave it to the experts, as there is no doubt the criminal justice system is better equipped to judge the veracity of the accused's evidence while ensuring the accused is afforded full procedural fairness.

The re-enactment of section 57 will eliminate interference by the legislative arm of government in matters judicial and will restore the accountability of the Queensland parliament in the eyes of the public. When deceiving estimates committees punishment under contempt of parliament is simply not good enough. In fact, it is laughable. How does the government expect to retain legitimacy when it fails to act against toxic elements within its own ranks? This attitude, however, is the hallmark of the previous government. There are disturbing similarities between the previous Labor government and the current federal Labor government. There are undercurrents of dishonesty and disrespect of the public whose vote

they rely on. How quickly did Mr Nuttall feel the desertion of his colleagues when it was discovered that his friendship was politically unsavoury? One of the boys—one of the chosen few—one minute and cast out—a leper—the next.

Later tonight this House will be voting on this bill and it will be very telling—in fact, very enlightening—to see which side of accountability and transparency those opposite will side on. It has been interesting to hear the speeches of those opposite. Some of them seem to be commending the bill while others, particularly that of the member for Rockhampton—or maybe it was his speechwriter—seem to be opposing it. Will those opposite continue to tread the well-worn path of Labor past and turn a blind eye to the truth in this House or will they vote with us to see honesty re-established as a central tenet of good governance in Queensland?

However, the re-insertion of this section and the amendment of this bill will be a lasting legacy of the LNP government. It is not afraid to stand by what it speaks. It is not ashamed of what it believes in. It is honest with the people of Queensland. This government will always do what it believes is right for Queensland and it will not legislate to protect those who fail to stand up to the highest standards of our fine community. I am proud to be part of a government whose integrity cannot be spoken against and whose thoughts are foremost for Queenslanders and not for itself.

This bill delivers on another LNP promise to deliver transparency in government by making it illegal to lie in parliament. The bill delivers on the government's pre-election commitment by inserting into the Criminal Code repealed section 57, false evidence before parliament, to make it an offence to knowingly give false evidence to parliament or its committees. The offence applies where false evidence is given during an examination before the Legislative Assembly or committee and is another achievement I can be proud of as a member of the Newman government. I commend the LNP government and, in particular, I commend the Attorney-General for taking this step in the right direction and making integrity a cornerstone of this government and this House. I commend the bill to the House.