




Speech By
Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 21 November 2013

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Member for South Brisbane

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.36 am): Over the past two days I have sought to highlight significant shortcomings in the attitude of the ALP and various Independent members in their approach to their roles as members of this House. In particular, I have sought to highlight the complete lack of integrity in many of their dealings. I did this with no sense of triumphalism but as a sincere endeavour to point to the way in which performance falls far short of promise.

We cannot escape the fact that this parliament will lose the confidence of the people of Queensland if we fail to practice what we preach. To speak in high-minded language of the importance of our integrity and then to fall so far short of the standards we have set ourselves is a recipe for a continuing loss of public confidence.

On Tuesday I pointed to the fact that the honourable member for South Brisbane had failed to comply with the provisions of standing order 259—that is, the requirement to declare any pecuniary interest before a member participates in a division. Yesterday in parliament the honourable member tried to exculpate herself by saying that her omission ‘was in no way deliberate or intentional’. The honourable member claimed to take full responsibility for her actions but, in reality, did nothing else.

What I, and I suspect many others, find particularly disturbing in this whole sorry tale is that the honourable member for South Brisbane believes that this is the beginning and end of the matter. However, the member for South Brisbane is one of the six members of the Ethics Committee. The committee’s areas of responsibility as set out in section 104B of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 are as follows: dealing with complaints about the ethical conduct of particular members; and dealing with alleged breaches of parliamentary privilege by members of the Assembly and other persons. These are clearly significant responsibilities—and they are not responsibilities which should be exercised by anyone with a cavalier attitude towards their own obligations to this House and the people of Queensland.

I am hard pressed to think of a more cavalier attitude than that revealed by the honourable member for South Brisbane yesterday when she sought to excuse her dereliction of duty by blaming her failure to attend an introductory session for new members when these important responsibilities were explained. This is ludicrous—a member of the important Ethics Committee, which sits in judgement on other members of parliament, believes it is adequate to blame her nonattendance at an information session for new members. This is nothing more than a West End version of ‘the dog ate my homework’ excuse. I find it hard to believe that the honourable member—who is gaining a reputation as an assiduous disrupter of the proceedings of this House—has not examined the standing orders in detail.

The simple fact to emerge from this sorry episode is that the honourable member lacks the moral authority to judge her parliamentary colleagues. The honourable member is no longer in any position to deliberate on the conduct of others when her own conduct fell so short of accepted standards. Accordingly, there are two available options to resolve this impasse. Firstly, the honourable member for South Brisbane should do the decent thing and resign from the Ethics Committee or, secondly, the Leader of the Opposition should demonstrate the leadership qualities she always claims to possess and require the honourable member for South Brisbane to resign from the Ethics Committee. It is time for the honourable member for South Brisbane and the Leader of the Opposition to act honestly and ethically. The member for South Brisbane must immediately resign her position on the Ethics Committee.