



Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

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MOTION

Crime, Media Reporting

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (5.08 pm): It is a toss-up which is the most disturbing—‘the great lie or the great buy’. They are not my words, but issues have been raised with me recently and it is worth sharing them in relation to this motion. The first is a great lie—an absolute abandonment—

Mr POWER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There was unparliamentary language that is unbecoming.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will just take some advice in relation to that. I ask you to resume your seat please, member for Burnett—

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:—and I will take the point of order in silence!

Mr Power: We dealt with this last week with a quote as well.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I will manage the chamber and I will take the point of order. I do not need the assistance, Leader of the Opposition. I was just seeking some advice in relation to quotes and the use of context. That word has been ruled unparliamentary in every context and in every usage. I ask you to withdraw, and if you want to use it in that quote you will have to find another way to express that.

Mr BENNETT: Thank you; I certainly will withdraw. A broken promise is a broken promise is a broken promise. You can wriggle, squirm and hand wring as much as you like, but when the fog of self-serving spin has cleared a broken promise is still a broken promise.

While some may elect to suggest that there are problems with media reporting, I will remind the House of some of the facts in relation to crime in Bundaberg. Crime is up since Labor came into power. Unlawful use of motor vehicles is up 176 per cent, unlawful entry is up 62 per cent, other thefts are up 63 per cent, and assaults are up 204 per cent. It is timely that we acknowledge those who have been forgotten in Bundaberg, like the team at Network rentals. These are real people. They have been targeted four times in the last 12 months. Warren and his staff suffered more than \$600,000 in damages in the last attack, and he was brutally bashed. Again, these are youth criminals who are out on bail under the laws of this government.

Labor swore with their hands pressed firmly on their hearts that if they were elected they would deliver plenty of legacy projects for Bundy. We will never forget that the local member has reaffirmed these deceptions hundreds of times—things like the new hospital, flood mitigation, Paradise Dam, a drug and alcohol centre, and solutions to the health crisis, the housing crisis, the teachers crisis and crime.

How do you best disguise this singular lack of character and moral fibre? The answer is to break a promise, obviously. You simply justify your broken promise by telling another one. Then you tell another one, denying that you ever broke the promise in the first place. Once you have told that first one, it comes easily and you just keep going. Labor promises whatever it takes and they will say whatever it takes and then walk away with a wave of their hands: 'There's nothing to see here.' It is all about the great buy. They want to buy votes by sprinkling a bit of fairy dust and telling us that it is all good, but these are suffering Queenslanders, these are suffering people, these are our most vulnerable. Labor is doing a terrible job at running this state and this is what they have resorted to. Labor's answer to every problem is to sling locals a couple of hundred bucks in an attempt to get them to stick with them. This insults the intelligence of the electorate, but so does the swearing that their word is their bond, and then they break it without even a blink.

We have had nearly 10 years of cumulative failures of the Labor government and there are too many to mention. I have mentioned them before: the housing crisis, the cost-of-living crisis, the power prices, the aged-care crisis, infrastructure, youth crime, housing and hospitals. The Oxford Dictionary defines a crisis as 'a time of great disagreement, confusion, or suffering'. That is exactly what is happening in the Bundaberg region every day. We should never forget the displaced people who are living under the bridge. That never happened until this local member arrived. It is alarming to reflect on the degree to which the government has failed to ensure one of life's basic needs—that is, shelter—as we see a rapidly growing number of people who are living on the streets at the entrance to our great city.

What has added to the crisis is that fewer homes have been built than ever before and the median cost of rent has increased. This is a reflection of bad government policy. With plenty of virtue signalling, Labor continues to promote the appearance of standing for something but has absolutely nothing of substance to offer except arrogance and hubris. This government talks a big game but they cannot back it up.

With the election some months away, it is time people examined Labor's record more closely and challenged misinformation, distortions and falsehoods that have been peddled in press releases, social media and newspaper ads. There is a noticeable increase in Labor spin. The misinformation floating around indicates that a misleading election campaign is already underway. We have seen plenty of pro-Labor tax funded billboards appearing locally. With respect to the big bold promises, many have been broken and many will not even be completed until after the Olympics in 2032. How is that? They have promised so much and have taken two election cycles to even get things off the ground.

With power prices, grocery bills and housing costs all increasing, everyone's focus should be on the cost of living. Labor's solutions are bandaid measures that merely attempt to hide the problems—like selective subsidies for household electricity bills. What is needed is an end to government policies that are driving up the cost of living.

It is interesting that we are resorting to blaming the media. It is interesting that we continue to see selective quotes that have been put out in social media and the media. I guess there comes a time when people have to look at their own moral fortitude about what is real and what contestability of ideas is. Democracy is about having debates; it certainly is not about distorting the truth, taking people on a ride and, more importantly, breaking promises—because you cannot use the word that really refers to what this is.

I will end with a quote that was given to me when I was doorknocking on Saturday. I will not use the gentleman's name, but the local member was described as a deluded student politician, good on big announcements, reliant on factional party bosses, but out of his depth in understanding and representing the real people of the Bundaberg region.