



Speech By  
**Joan Pease**


**MEMBER FOR LYTTON**

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**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Secure Communities Partnership Program**

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (2.12 pm): During the last election campaign Queenslanders heard a lot of promises from the now Premier, most of which we have since heard he has not delivered. One of those promises was the Secure Communities Partnership Program—a \$40 million program that was supposed to help small businesses improve safety and security directly. When one scratches beneath the surface we see a familiar story: big promises in front of the cameras, confusion afterwards and small businesses left feeling used.

In Bundaberg during the campaign the now Premier stood alongside Warren, the owner of Network Car & Truck Rentals, or 'Wazza' as he likes to be called. The now Premier promoted the policy as something that businesses like Wazza's could apply for: funding to help improve safety through measures like CCTV, even security upgrades. When Wazza went to apply he discovered something very different. He was told he could not apply; the grant was restricted to local councils only. That was confirmed during the estimates hearing when I put questions directly to the minister about the eligibility criteria. Here we had a situation where a hardworking small business owner had been used by the now Premier as a backdrop for an election announcement, only to discover that the very program that he was promised access to was never actually open to him. Mr Crisafulli is a smooth operator. Is he clever or is he just slick? I am not sure which. Either way, it is not good enough. Wazza from Bundy deserves better. Small businesses deserve honesty, not to be campaign props.

The story does not end there. After our questioning at estimates the government has quietly changed the rules. This week the small business minister was duly dragged out and dusted off to do a ministerial statement to remind Queenslanders that in round 2 small businesses can now apply for these grants. That is great news for small businesses. Let us be very clear about what this means. It means that without scrutiny, without questions being asked in this chamber, small businesses like Network Car & Truck Rentals would still be locked out of the program that was advertised to them during the election. Sadly, Wazza himself told Channel 7 last week that he felt abandoned and used. This is not the sentiment of someone who wants to feel supported by the government; it is the sentiment of someone who believes a promise and was let down.

This program was supposed to support safer communities and stronger small businesses. Instead it has become an example of a shambolic government, poor communication and shifting rules. Who is left out—small businesses owners in Bundaberg like Wazza who was left wondering whether he was part of a policy or just part of a photo opportunity. Queensland small businesses deserve better than that and this opposition will continue asking questions to make sure they get it.