

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

June 30, 2010

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (13:31): I move:

That this house adopts the following Statement of Principles for Members of Parliament:

- I. Members of parliament are in a unique position of being accountable to the electorate. The electorate is the final arbiter of the conduct of members of parliament and has the right to dismiss them from office at elections.
- II. Members of parliament have a responsibility to maintain the public trust placed in them by performing their duties with fairness, honesty and integrity, subject to the laws of the state and rules of the parliament, and using their influence to advance the common good of the people of South Australia.
- III. Political parties and political activities are a part of the democratic process. Participation in political parties and political activities is within the legitimate activities of members of parliament.
- IV. Members of parliament should declare any conflict of interest between their private financial interests and decisions in which they participate in the execution of their duties. Members must declare their interests as required by the Members of Parliament (Register of Interests) Act 1983 and declare their interests when speaking on a matter in the house or a committee in accordance with the standing orders.
- V. A conflict of interest does not exist where the member is only affected as a member of the public or a member of a broad class.
- VI. Members of parliament should not promote any matter, vote on any bill or resolution, or ask any question in the parliament or its committees, in return for any financial or pecuniary benefit.
- VII. In accordance with the requirements of the Members of Parliament (Register of Interests) Act 1983, members of parliament should declare all gifts and benefits received in connection with their official duties, including contributions made to any fund for a member's benefit.
- VIII. Members of parliament should not accept gifts or other considerations that create a conflict of interest.
- IX. Members of parliament should apply the public resources with which they are provided for the purpose of carrying out their duties.
- X. Members of parliament should not knowingly and improperly use official information, which is not in the public domain, or information obtained in confidence in the course of their parliamentary duties, for private benefit.
- XI. Members of parliament should act with civility in their dealings with the public, ministers and other members of parliament and the Public Service.
- XII. Members of parliament should always be mindful of their responsibility to accord due respect to their right of freedom of speech within parliament and not to misuse this right, consciously avoiding undeserved harm to any individual.

And that:

- (a) upon election and re-election to parliament, within 14 days of taking and subscribing the oath or making and subscribing an affirmation as a member of parliament, each member must sign an acknowledgement to confirm they have read and accept the Statement of Principles, and
- (b) a message be sent to the Legislative Council transmitting the foregoing resolution and requesting its concurrence thereto.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:55): I, too, rise to support the motion moved by the Hon. Bob Such and spoken to by the members for Bragg and Morialta. I thank the committee for its work on this statement of principles. It will be interesting to note whether the Labor Party supports this statement of principles. As has been said, quite a few principles were broken in the election campaign. We had to amend a law yesterday because the Labor Party cannot help itself. We have to legislate to protect them from themselves.

Mr Gardner: We have to legislate for good behaviour.

Mr PEDERICK: Yes; we have to legislate for good behaviour. That is where, as members of parliament, we do need to be accountable to the electorate because, as this statement of principles states, the electorate is the final arbiter of the conduct of members of parliament and has the right to dismiss them from office at elections. This is a fundamental right, and I spoke on this briefly yesterday. The fact is that we are elected to this place, and it is the right of electors to keep us here or not, so we should behave in an appropriate manner and we should be accountable to electors.

It is a far better system than what happens in some places in the world where we have autocracies and dictatorships and people do not have the right to voice their opinion or to

have the person who wins by a majority vote represent them in a parliament, or consequently a government or opposition in that country. It is sad when you see some people on voting day come up to polling booths reluctantly. I know of one story when my wife was manning a polling booth in the recent state election. She confronted a guy who was obviously having a light refreshment, having a beer, and he said, 'What the heck do I do to vote?'

I do not think that he bothered grabbing a how-to-vote card from anyone. Who knows what he did? I said to my wife later that day, 'How do we connect to these people?' I thought about it for a minute and I thought that, perhaps for people such as that who are having a relaxing Saturday, having a few refreshments during the day, perhaps we could hand out stubby holders at the booth and they might remember us by that, with our name emblazoned on them when they go in to vote. I am not trying—

The Hon. S.W. Key interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Yes. I note the comments from opposite. I do say that in jest, I must admit because, obviously, there are principles we have to uphold going into an election. You just get frustrated. It was a comment I made in jest in terms of how we reach these voters and protect the principles of everyone's democratic right to vote in this country—to vote on who we want to retain in our electorates or who we want to get voted in to take up a position in the parliament. I seek leave to continue my remarks.