1. The Member for Southern Downs and Leader of the Opposition, Mr Lawrence Springborg MP, introduced the Bill as a Private Member’s Bill on 27 August 2008.
2. The Explanatory Notes to the Bill state the purpose of the Bill is to amend the Criminal Code to introduce the offence of giving false evidence to Parliament. The *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* is also to be amended to ensure that acts of contempt of Parliament which amount to providing false evidence are prosecuted under the Code offence.
3. The proposed new section 57 of the Criminal Code is in almost identical terms to the section repealed by the *Criminal Code Amendment Act 2006*.
4. The previous section 57 of the Criminal Code was repealed because it was inconsistent with a fundamental tenet of the Westminster system, embodied in section 8 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, that debates or proceedings in Parliament cannot be impeached or questioned in any court of place out of the Parliament.
5. The justification for the privilege contained in Article 9 of the Bill of Rights 1688 (and restated in section 8 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*) is that parliamentarians must be free to speak in the Parliament without the risk of being sued or prosecuted. Parliamentarians answer for their conduct in the House to the House itself. The examination of the truth or falsity of statements made by an accused Member in the criminal courts instead of the House is contrary to accepted notions of parliamentary freedom of speech.
6. Repealing section 57 meant that, for members, Queensland was brought into line with the position in the House of Commons and in the Federal Houses of Parliament and other States and Territories.
7. Punishments that may be imposed by the Parliament for contempt include suspension from Parliament, a fine or term of imprisonment. There are also political sanctions, for example, the Westminster convention is that Ministers who knowingly mislead Parliament will reign.
8. Cabinet decided to oppose the Criminal Code (Truth in Parliament) Amendment Bill 2008.
9. *Attachments*
* [Criminal Code (Truth in Parliament) Amendment Bill 2008.](attachments/Criminal%20Code%20Truth%20in%20Parliament%20Amendment%20Bill.pdf)
* [Explanatory Notes](attachments/Private%20Member%27s%20Bill%20Truth%20in%20Parliament%20EXNOTESpdf.pdf)