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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Main Committee**

**GRIEVANCE DEBATE**

**Rudd Government**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 31 May 2010**

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# SPEECH

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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Broadbent, Russell, MP

**Source** House  
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**Question No.**

**Mr BROADBENT** (McMillan) (9.20 pm)—Mr Deputy Speaker Sidebottom, I know you personally understand the word ‘disappointment’ from a political perspective because we share that. I also know that when a child is holding an ice-cream in a cone—he has been waiting for it; he has gone into the shop with his parents; he has walked up; he has received the ice-cream; he has walked out of the shop; he has licked it for the first time—and then, plop, it falls on the ground, that is serious disappointment. I was told by Kelly Sexton, who works with Petro Georgiou, that her brother did exactly that when he was three, but it was worse. He not only dropped the ice-cream but he then stood up and slipped over in it. Kelly, as a young girl, thought it was very funny. You can imagine her three-year-old brother did not think it was funny at all. Disappointment can be one of the most hurtful emotions any of us can carry and try and deal with. I do not believe there is one person in the whole of this parliament that has not, at some stage, struggled with disappointment.

Why would I be talking about disappointment tonight? I have been out in the electorate. I have had a fantastic time with the kids playing in *Oliver!* down at Wonthaggi. While I was there, who walks in but Michael O’Connor, brother of Brendan and a friend of mine. I said, ‘What are you doing here?’ He said: ‘My niece is in this play. This is my mum and dad.’ Grandma and Grandpa were there. The *Oliver!* program was fantastic—certainly no disappointment there. On the Saturday night I was with the Koo Wee Rup historical society talking about the town that I grew up in and painting a picture of the town as it was in the fifties and sixties. That was great, so there was no disappointment there. They might have been disappointed with the guest speaker, but there was generally no disappointment from my point of view. It was a great night with my dad and mum’s family and friends, reminiscing about what that small town was like in those years. It was quite different from today, of course.

What I did hear from my community was a disappointment that I would not have expected in the first three years of a new government. These were the people that put this government in place. Having been around people all of my life—in business, in sport and in all the other activities I told you about the other day—I do have a feeling for the people and what they are feeling. What I got, right around the areas where I was on the weekend, was this uncanny, amazing disappointment with the Rudd government. I said to them: ‘What is your disappointment? Is it the pink batts?’ They said, ‘No, it is something that cannot be explained.’

What they are telling me is this. It was not the promise of cheaper groceries. They loved that, although it was not fulfilled. It was not the promise of cheaper petrol through Fuelwatch, which was not fulfilled and dumped. It was not the mother of all backflips with triple pike that we heard this week on government advertising when the Prime Minister, having said before the election, ‘No way this will happen under me,’ now disregards even the guidelines and says, ‘Now we have this national emergency on our hands.’ Suddenly we are talking about ‘national emergency’ in government advertising?

The general community out there is saying, ‘This is not on.’ There is a greater expectation of government from the people of Australia these days. There is disappointment when a politician tells them that they are going to do something and then chooses not to do it, for whatever reason.

I think the greatest disappointment is that it was not explained why there were backflips made which disregarded promises and overturned programs. You could say that perhaps it is Landcare. They love their Landcare and that \$10 million has been taken off them. Perhaps it is the nurses they thought they were getting for their GP clinics, and they find out, ‘We’ve got \$25,000 per nurse but they’ve taken all the procedures away from us.’ The GP clinic is actually going to be working at a loss for employing these nurses. Or is the nurse going to lose her job? I have a lovely email here from a practice that explains the whole situation and how it is going to affect them. If they employ five nurses they are going to end up with a \$34,000 loss. I do not mind handing that on to you, Deputy Speaker Sidebottom, if you would like to look at it.

I feel that the profound disappointment though comes from their overall picture of all politicians, not just this government, who they believe are saying one thing and then treating them as mugs. When the government’s ‘greatest moral dilemma of all time’, the ETS, was overturned, there would have been those within government

ranks who actually thought that was great because that was a problem they did not have to deal with. In fact it was a betrayal to many, many people who believed in the promise, in the hope and in the expectation. It was like that kid with the ice-cream. He had hope and expectation: this was his ice-cream and he was going to lick it. He was going to love every bit of it, and off went the top of the ice-cream onto the ground. Kelly Sexton's brother not only fell on the ground but slipped over and fell on his back.

There are a swag of people out there who are seriously and undeniably affected by disappointment in this government. I am not saying they come to me because I am a Liberal politician and they want to complain to me. I am not talking about dealing with Liberal members of my party. I am talking about the people in the street who want to stop me, grab me by the arm and tell me how disappointed they are. Sometimes they have a direct reason for being disappointed and they feel that the government has not explained itself and has not said why or what it is doing. But the great disappointment is the backflips and what they see as the costs for schools that should have been cheaper, when there is shade cloth worth \$250,000 being installed for \$1 million. The public hate rip-offs. They hate being ripped off themselves and they hate their own government being ripped off. They know someone is pulling it somewhere.

When you compare what the Catholic schools in our electorates have done with their money, and how well the program from the federal government has worked with them, with how the states have dealt with it though their systems, you see it is the complete opposite. If you do not believe me, go and check. I do not know whether it is different in other states, but the Catholic schools in Victoria have done a remarkable job with the money they have been given. They have some projects underway, some completed, and the schools look great.

I am not a Catholic but I am very close to Father Bernie. We were stuck in the back row of the car park at his church because there had been a big funeral for John Benyon, who was a great guy, and Father Bernie and I could not get out to go to the cemetery. I said, 'What's this over here, Father?' He said, 'That's the Julia Gillard driveway.' I said, 'What's this over here?' He said, 'That's the Julia Gillard new memorial hall.' I said: 'What about the old buildings down here? There is a bit of work going on down there.' This school has been turned from a very ordinary school into a beautiful primary school. It is a magnificent primary school due to them. He said: 'We're getting the Julia Gillard refurbishment right through there. We love it. It's fantastic.'

I am not going to step back from any of those things, but a lot of very small schools in my electorate feel like they have been duded. I have not said anything on this issue. I have been trying to help them work through their problems, hopefully, as a good backbench member would do on behalf of his community. If the government is supplying a program, let us try and deliver it. Profound disappointment has become ingrained, and I believe that if Mr Rudd does not address this profound disappointment he is going to have great difficulty facing the people in a very short time.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr S Sidebottom)**—Order! The time allotted for the debate having expired, the debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 192B. The debate is adjourned, and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.