

Billy Gordon MP media statement 8.1.15¹

Last week I resigned from the Australian Labor Party. I will not resign from Parliament. My decision is based on advice from the Clerk of Parliament, who gave detailed reasons why I did not have to resign over past events and allegations. I am also determined to honour my commitments to my constituents.

During the election campaign I committed to tackling entrenched social and economic problems in Cook, and helping communities seize economic development opportunities. I am determined to honour those commitments, and am humbled by and grateful for the steadfast belief shown in me over the last week by my supporters in Cook.

It is time to turn my attention and energy to the needs of my electorate. Youth unemployment is at 22% in regional far north Queensland; major infrastructure projects like the Peninsula Development Road need championing; and communities are suffering unacceptable cost-of-living pressures.

I believe Queenslanders also need stable government. As such, I will support the Palaszczuk Government according to the aspirations of my constituents, and my conscience.

I will sit on the cross benches with members of Katter's Australian Party, and will play a constructive role in allowing the Palaszczuk government to govern with confidence, while at all times ensuring that I represent my constituents.

The Premier's response upon learning of my juvenile convictions was her prerogative; however under the law of Queensland, those convictions had been expunged and I was not obliged to disclose them.

This is a difficulty for anyone who has rehabilitated from juvenile wrongdoing who seeks public office: does one make a disclosure that the law does not require one to make? I put myself forward as a candidate for election, relying upon the law that says people like me are entitled to a second chance in life.

The leaking of juvenile and spent records for political ends is deeply disturbing in our democracy.

I will now do what is necessary to shield my family and children from further public duress. With my conscience and the law as my guide, I will address issues that have been raised. I will not do so in the media, as others have sought to do.

My focus now is on demonstrating to my family, my children and my community that I am a good man and that I will honour their vote for me. Some people, even MPs, may think they have a perfect past. Mine has not been. I have remorse for past events, but I have learned many lessons since I was a young man.

My experiences have given me deep empathy and insight into the many troubling issues facing my community, and the understanding to represent them in the parliament.

¹ As published in the *Brisbane Times*: <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/billy-gordon-statement-april-8-2015-20150407-1mgdbx.html>.

I vow to work with leaders from all communities in the seat of Cook to support individuals and families caught in a cycle of social crisis, and assist them to turn their lives around. I know what it is to turn your life around and take a second chance.

There are those in the community who doubt that redemption and rehabilitation are possible. However forgiveness is one of humankind's healing touchstones. Our political system is the worse for politicians who, for their own ends, seek to exploit another's past troubles.

I will make no other statement in the media on these matters at this time.