



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HOURS

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (1.24 a.m.): In rising to speak in this adjournment debate, I think that the topic is relevant and it concerns the late sittings of this parliament and a government that promised to reform the parliamentary sitting times and not sit past 7.30 at night. What do we see in this House where there is a record number of women members and there has been a lot of talk about the need for family friendly practices and family friendly hours? On Wednesday night, this House sat until about 3 o'clock in the morning and it will sit until between 1.30 and 2 this morning. That shows the hypocrisy of this government.

Earlier in the year the government was struggling to have enough legislation to debate and pass in this parliament. It was stringing out debates and running very close to the end of the list of bills. Now the government is trying to push through a lot of legislation by the end of the year. Controversial legislation is being brought on and we are having very late sittings. Some of the members opposite say that we should not have the right to speak to legislation. Yet they speak to legislation. It is important that we speak to legislation.

I want to draw the attention of the House to the hypocrisy of this Beattie Labor government in that it is not reforming the hours of this parliament. If the government wants to see more women or men who believe in family friendly practices in this place, it is about time that it took the matter seriously and implemented proper and appropriate sitting hours. The government should also consider the staff of this place—the Hansard staff and the other staff members who work late hours. I think that it is about time that the government lived up to what it said it was going to do.

I want to draw this matter to the attention of this House, because I think that it is unfortunate that we have not seen the reform in this regard, particularly when the House was not run particularly well at the beginning of the year. Owing to that poor legislative program, we are now seeing a lot of legislation being pushed through the House by the end of the year. It is disappointing. I do not think that it is in the interests of families. I do not think that it is in interests of women or men. I think that the fact that the sitting hours of this House have not been reformed is a great disappointment to this parliament and to a lot of people in Queensland.
