



Speech by

Hon. Robert Swarten

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Hansard Wednesday, 11 October 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Parliamentary Sittings

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.14 am): Mr Speaker, as you know, the Queensland parliament is a very productive place and regularly sits for between 10 and 12 hours a day. You would also be aware of recent media reports in which the number of days that this House sits was criticised. That is why I feel obliged in my capacity as Leader of the House, and in support of all members—from both sides—who work hard both in their electorate and here in this House, to set the record straight.

It is not necessarily the number of days that a parliament sits that is indicative of its work but the number of hours per day and per year. A comparison of the number of sitting days and hours from other jurisdictions in Australia illustrates just how hard we in Queensland do work, and I table this comparative document for the information of the House.

Tabled paper: Queensland Parliamentary Library brief regarding sitting days.

I will highlight just one of the examples. In 2005 the Queensland parliament sat for 49 days, or 558 hours; Victoria sat for 48 days, or 469 hours. So we sat a similar number of days but almost 90 hours more than Victoria. I have also looked into other Westminster parliaments and can advise that in 2005 the UK House of Commons sat for 65 days, or 535 hours. So even though that parliament sat for 16 days more than Queensland, this parliament actually worked for over 20 hours more.

I am not going to use 2006 as an example because, as all members know, this year was an election year, which of course impacted on the number of days this House could sit. However, I can advise members that in the 29 days the House has sat so far this year we have already sat for 336 hours, and I am very happy to assure members we will sit for many more in the remaining sitting days!