




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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MOTION: STANDING RULES AND ORDERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.11 pm): I rise to support the motion before the House. I want to respond to the Deputy Premier's assertion that this side of the House are doing things for their own purposes in this motion, when obviously it is the Labor Party that are doing things for their own purposes. The hypocrisy of the Deputy Premier's statements is reflected in her concern about the use of the word hypocrisy, which she has used seven times before in parliamentary speeches, yet now that they are in government she is concerned about such a word being used.

This is a hypocritical government which is questioning whether we want to do things for a purpose other than for the efficiency of the House. As we heard only a month ago, the faux indignation from those opposite is astounding. When we look at the sessional orders contained in our standing orders book, the private members' statements that we now have for a total time of 15 minutes, the introduction of a private member's bill and the private member's motion each sitting day are a reflection of the fact that this is a different parliament from the 54th Parliament, and it is also different than it was a month ago because the circumstances are different. The sessional orders were amended to reflect the numbers in the House and then the standing orders were amended by the Leader of the House by leave and without notice to improve the efficiency of the House.

What we are seeking to do is amend the sessional orders to reflect the circumstances of the House, which—whether the member for Inala wishes to acknowledge it or not—are different from the last time that we met in March. On one hand, by taking out a full-page advertisement saying that the member for Cook should resign from the parliament the Premier is publicly saying that the circumstances have changed; whereas on the other hand, the Premier is corralling the Attorney-General to negotiate with the member for Cook to ensure the continuing support of someone she says is unfit to be in this place. Now, as we offer the Labor government a chance to stand for their principles—their much flouted accountability and transparency—it is too hard; it is too much trouble; it is not worth the bother.

We are seeking to ensure that we do not have to accept the vote of the Independent member for Cook. The LNP has expressed the intention not to accept the vote of the member for Cook. This member, by his own admission in a personal explanation, told the House five weeks ago that he had immediately moved to rectify his tax affairs and ensure that any outstanding child support payments had been made to his ex-partner so that we could put this issue beyond doubt. It is now clear that he failed to mention the other ex-partner who is owed thousands of dollars by the member for Cook. Again today he had to make a personal explanation to this chamber clarifying exactly what he was doing to meet his obligations as a father after failing to pay the correct child support amount.

In April the Premier said that the member for Cook was not a fit person to stand in this House. What does she say now? He is not fit to be in the Labor Party, but fit enough to use his vote to cling to power like a drowning man latching onto a life raft in rough seas. In March the member for Inala told

the House that she expected high standards not just from her ministry and backbench but from all members of this House. Does she still feel this way or, in the case of the member for Cook, is near enough good enough? The member for Inala was asked today by the opposition leader if she would stand by her words about sitting back and happily accepting the vote of a disgraced crossbencher. Despite your best intentions, the member for Inala did not answer the question. She would not say if she would accept the tainted vote of the member for Cook.

I wonder if we will see consistency or expediency. Methinks the latter. We have already seen a sleight of hand by the Premier. 'I have high standards,' she says, 'but now I need the first law officer of the state to negotiate with a person whose vote I need and who is a confessed law-breaker.' So much for high standards. I call on the Attorney-General to demonstrate her own integrity and resist the Premier's expediency.

What we have seen is two courageous women who have taken on the Labor Party to get what is owed to them and their children—the member for Cook's children. He has been punted from the Labor Party as it seeks to find the moral high ground, but not from parliament, as the member for Inala could see the premiership slipping from her grasp. The time for her to 'put up or shut up' is upon us. Will she stand by her man, or will she stand by her principles and help us amend the standing orders so that the member for Cook's vote is not counted?

This side of the parliament stands by our conduct in this motion today. This is an important issue for a parliament facing circumstances that we have not seen for nearly 20 years and which have changed within the last month or five weeks. We ask this government whether they have the high standards that they claim, or are they expedient enough and hypocritical enough to take the vote of someone who they say is not fit to be in this parliament when they need that vote to stay on the government benches.