




Speech By
Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

Record of Proceedings, 2 June 2015

MOTION

Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (6.16 pm): I rise to speak against the motion moved by the member for Callide. This is the first motion I have risen to speak to in this House. I am just sorry that it was not one of a more substantive nature. I cannot deny that this morning as I heard the member for Callide give notice of the motion that is before us tonight I was perplexed. I was perplexed then as to its premise and, after hearing him speak, I am none the wiser.

As chair of the Health and Ambulance Services Committee, I note that two of the four bills outlined in the motion are before my committee. It would seem by inference that the original motion as circulated by the member for Callide this morning, which made a spurious assertion of emerging abuse of the committee system, applies to my committee. I am not sure how my committee colleagues, the member for Greenslopes, the member for Buderim, my deputy chair the member for Mudgeeraba, the member for Thuringowa and the member for Moggill feel about this, but I for one was hurt.

Honourable members: Aww!

Ms LINARD: Thank you. We are all one happy family. I thank members for their sympathy.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! Pause the clock.

Ms LINARD: I note, of course, that this motion has since been amended. This parliament has clear guidelines in regard to the conduct of committee business. I appreciate that, as a new member in this House, I have much to learn regarding the established rules and protocols of the House, but what I do know is that there are some resources to light the way and I have one right here. Let us go first to the matter of committee meeting times. Standing order 198 states—

(1) The date and time of the first meeting of a committee after its appointment by the House shall be set by the Chairperson.

...

(3) Subsequent meetings of the committee shall be set by the committee or may be called with notice by the Chairperson or their delegate.

My committee resolved to meet at 9 am on the Wednesday morning of each sitting week. That is a matter of public knowledge. However, I appreciate that that is not so for all committees. Some meet earlier and some meet on different and additional days. I do not believe that a time should be prescriptively applied.

I now turn to the second component of the motion before us tonight, which relates to reporting dates. Standing order 131, on page 31 for the benefit of the member for Callide, states—

- (1) If the question for the first reading of the Bill succeeds, then the Bill stands referred to the portfolio committee or other committee nominated by the Member who presented the Bill ...

Standing order 136, on page 32, follows on and clearly outlines the requirement of a portfolio committee. I quote—

- (1) A portfolio committee must finally report to the House on a Bill within six calendar months of the Bill being referred to it or by such other time as fixed by the House or the committee of the Legislative Assembly.

Alternatively, it states—

- (2) The Committee of the Legislative Assembly may vary the time for report for any Bill ... but must report such decision to the House ...

That was not done in regard to the Mental Health (Recovery Model) Bill, introduced on 5 May, nor were any of the appropriate and available processes used to vary the reporting time for the Health Legislation (Waiting List Integrity) Amendment Bill introduced in the House during the last sitting.

As no time was fixed by the House or the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, in accordance with standing order 136 my committee is required to report to the House by 5 November. At its meeting on 6 May my committee resolved to defer taking submissions and conducting hearings on the mental health bill until after consultation on the government bill has been undertaken. I table our public statements in this regard.

Tabled Paper: Health and Ambulance Services Committee webpage, printed 2 June 2015, regarding Mental Health (Recovery Model) Bill 2015 [\[500\]](#).

This was a resolution of the committee, a bipartisan resolution of the committee by nature of the equal representation present on that committee, and I ask: was the member for Callide by implication asserting this morning—I, of course, appreciate the member has now had a change of heart—when he gave notice of his original motion the opinion that the members for Mudgeeraba, Buderim and Moggill are also parties to this so-called abuse of our committee system? This motion in its current form—

Ms Bates interjected.

Ms LINARD: I have it right here. It seeks to bring forward the reporting date for the private members' bills to 14 September.

Ms Bates interjected.

Ms LINARD: Under standing order 211, I have not divulged the contents of that letter because it was committee business.

This motion, in its current form, seeks to bring forward the reporting date for the private members' bills to 14 September, but for what purpose? Under the sessional orders bills cannot be debated before three months have passed from the reporting date. This would make the first date for debating the bills 14 December. As the final sitting day for 2015 is 3 December, this means that the bills would not be debated until 2016, even with the earlier reporting date. This has the effect of simply cutting short the time that the committees have to consider the bills and for submissions and evidence to be received.

A strong, active system of parliamentary committees provides greater accountability by making the policy and administrative functions of government more open and accountable. The only misuse of the committee system and indeed the parliament's time is by the member for Callide, who has us debating a motion on a subject which is clearly provided for in the standing orders of this House.