




Speech By  
**Stirling Hinchliffe**

**MEMBER FOR SANDGATE**

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**MOTION: STANDING RULES AND ORDERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

 **Mr HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (6.26 pm): Isn't it extraordinary to see a group of people who have such extraordinary form, with a lack of respect for our democratic institutions? There are so many examples over the past three years—in fact, so many examples over past generations—of those opposite and their predecessors having a lack of respect for the democratic institutions of this state and, in fact, a lack of respect for the democratic institutions in Westminster parliaments worldwide.

What we see here is a proposal coming from those who reformed the voting system in this parliament to achieve an improvement. It was a change that they claimed they wanted to see put in place for many, many years to come. That should not be a political plaything. What we are seeing tonight is a political try-on and a stunt. Political parties should not seek to change the voting procedures in our parliaments on a political whim. That is not the reason changes should be made. Any reforms should be sound reforms. In the last parliament these changes were worked through with the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. If this was not a political stunt and a political try-on, it would have gone to that forum first for a proper, mature discussion. But here we see a try-on. In the first six o'clock scream they have tried it on.

Let us look at the ways in which votes are recorded in Westminster parliaments throughout the world. As my colleague the Treasurer mentioned earlier, in this parliament formerly it was done on the basis of a division with those voting aye moving to the right of the chair and those voting no moving to the left of the chair. In other Westminster parliaments throughout the world we see members going through ayes lobbies and noes lobbies. There is some electronic voting in some Westminster parliaments throughout the world.

What we do not see and what we see slipped in here for a cheap political purpose is the concept of abstaining. There are very few Westminster parliaments that have abstaining recognised and provided for in their voting systems and procedures. Here yet again we have the vandals of Westminster democracy represented by the ghosts of the National Party with Lawrence Springborg reaching back—as he is already reaching back into his numerous attempts at becoming Premier—into the past and drawing forward the idea of how can we undermine the principles and traditions of Westminster democracy for our own cheap, grubby political purposes? We need to make sure that we are above—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Sandgate, I would urge you not to prompt the opposition and come back to the motion we are debating please.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your guidance. Here we are though and it is timely and appropriate to consider the proposal more deeply—that is, the question of abstaining votes being counted. This motion is about the crossbenchers voting before anyone else. That is the primary purpose of what is proposed before the House, but there has been an inconsistency in the way that this has been applied in that less than a year ago the then leader of the House proclaimed that the

new system being brought in was brilliant and great because it was going to get rid of those clamouring down the back—those who want to stand up and be famous in terms of, 'I want to be counted. I want to be seen. I want to be relevant.' It was all about that self-indulgence and self-importance. That was his main focus. Now he is saying that we want that to be up-front, but he does not include the Speaker. I think we should all understand this for what it is: a try-on and a stunt. Let us be consistent and stick with the status quo.