



Speech By
Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

Record of Proceedings, 2 June 2015

MOTION

Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates



Mr HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (6.05 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'be set for' be deleted and the following words inserted:

'the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to report on the Liquor and Fair Trading Legislation (Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill; the Agriculture and Environment Committee to report on the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill and the Health and Ambulance Services Committee to report on the Health Legislation (Waiting List Integrity) Amendment Bill;

Notes that in relation to the Mental Health (Recovery Model) Bill, the Health and Ambulance Services Committee has resolved to defer its consideration of this bill until a government Mental Health Bill 2015, proposed for introduction in September 2015, has been introduced to enable it to consider both bills together and report its findings to the House; and

Notes that parliamentary committees meet at a time most suitable to conduct their inquiries, noting that committees other than portfolio committees have regularly met at times other than Wednesday morning.'

The report-back date for private members' bills is six months from the date the bill is referred to a portfolio or other committee unless another time is fixed by the House or the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. The relevant provision, standing order 135A(b), notes that the Committee of the Legislative Assembly shall monitor and review the operation of committees, particularly the referral of bills to committees, and where appropriate vary the time for committees to report on bills or vary the committee responsibility for a bill. In addition, standing order 136(1) on portfolio committee reports notes that 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.

If the opposition were unhappy with a proposed report-back date they could have raised this in the CLA. It is, in fact, the CLA that sets the default report-back date on these occasions. If the member for Callide understood the standing orders in the manner that he attests and claims to, he would know that movers of private members' bills can write to the CLA to specify a report-back date or to raise this at CLA meetings.

Standing order 136(2) also makes it clear that the CLA may vary the time for report for any bill. The member for Callide should also be aware that prior to that a mover can specify a report-back date in their reference. Indeed, that is precisely what Labor and the now Premier did when in opposition. They followed due process and proper procedure, not like the cavalier cowboys opposite.

More importantly, this motion as put by the member for Callide would have no effect on when any of these bills would be debated in the House. These bills were referred between 5 May and 19 May. With a report-back date of six months from referral, committees would have reported back between 5 and 19 November 2015. The sessional orders provide that the private members' bills cannot be set down for debate until three months after the report-back date. This would have been

between 5 and 19 February 2016. Even with a new report-back date of 14 September the bills could not be debated until 5 to 19 December, but the last sitting date for 2015 is set down as 3 December. So even with the new date the bills could not be debated.

I am absolutely committed to being conciliatory, as is, obviously, in his unusual attempts, the member for Callide so I am happy to accept the 14 September date as proposed by the member for Callide for those private members' bills to which a committee has not made a determination about how they wish to treat the management of that bill.

Just as we saw in the last sitting period when the Speaker ruled the motion moved by the opposition out of order because it offended the standing orders, this once again shows the lack of knowledge of the standing orders by the opposition and, indeed, the member for Callide. He claims to be an expert on these things, but gets it wrong when the test comes.

I remind the former deputy premier that these are the very same standing orders that applied in the last parliament. Perhaps the member either has had a sudden bout of amnesia or is demonstrating ignorance of the very rules he has claimed to have supported previously. In fact, when I looked at the duration of report-back times and periods for the initial referral of private members' bills of the ALP, the KAP and Independent members of the 54th Parliament, as well as bills that lapsed when the parliament was prorogued prior to the last election, the overwhelming majority were six months from the date of referral, consistent with the standing and sessional orders. I table this information for the members of the House.

Tabled paper: Duration of the initial referral for private members' bills for the ALP, KAP and Independent members of the 54th Parliament [\[499\]](#).

That further underscores our argument that both Labor in opposition and the crossbench understood and used the system appropriately. If it is good enough for Labor, both in opposition and in government, then it should be good enough for the LNP in opposition as well. It also goes to show that the system is indeed working well. I remind the member for Callide that, with the exception of the PCCC, there are an equal number of opposition members of parliament represented on parliamentary committees. Presumably, they will have agreed to the parliamentary reporting dates. Perhaps the member for Callide is just being mischievous and is trying to waste our time. I hope that is not the case. I urge members to support the amendment.

(Time expired)