




Speech By
Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

Record of Proceedings, 17 February 2016

MOTION: AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (6.04 pm): I rise to speak against the motion moved by the member for Mudgeeraba. Disappointingly, this is the second time I have risen in this House to speak on a motion of a procedural rather than substantive nature. This parliament has a strong and active committee system that is enhancing the accountability of parliament, at least under this government. We are once again taking the parliament to the people, listening to them and giving them an opportunity to have a say on the operations of this House. This parliament has clear guidelines in regard to the conduct of committee business—when committees meet, how they are instructed, how and when they report. In appreciation of the dynamic nature of this place, our roles and demands within it, committees are also provided the necessary flexibility to manage their business—standing order 198 relates.

As the chair of a committee, I take seriously the conduct and operation of that committee, I take seriously the duties and role of that committee, and I take seriously the bipartisan operation of that committee. The member for Mudgeeraba would know this as she is a member of my committee. Members being provided with adequate time to read, consider and debate reports is a matter of significant importance, but it is also a matter of a procedural nature that could be dealt with by discussion within respective committees, by discussion with the Clerk, as it relates to secretariat resourcing, and by discussion or reference to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. In fact, I understand the CLA is currently reviewing the operation of committees in this House.

We discuss many things within our committee—without offending standing order 211, of course—including the schedules to inquiries, closing dates for submissions, hearing dates and reporting dates. We decide on those as a committee. Every member has an equal say on the time lines determined and we can alter them, and we must respond with flexibility to issues that arise. My colleague mentioned the mental health report. That is one of those examples where all six of us had to respond to a short time frame.

What I want to know is why we are having this discussion here tonight. Why are we standing here talking about matters that are procedural in nature when we could be debating issues of importance to Queenslanders? Last week in my electorate I talked to a woman who is fearful for her life due to domestic and family violence. She has lost her home, her friends, her sense of belonging and her safety in her community. She wants legislative change. She is not sitting at home hoping that we will talk about when draft reports are provided to members.

I had a long conversation with a gentleman on Friday about the challenge of homelessness and meeting the need of social housing in our community. He is concerned about a family with six children who are struggling to keep a roof over their heads and about how they will feed their children. He is not sitting at home hoping that I am standing here debating whether I have 48 hours within the normal course of business to read a report.

Weekly I have people come into my office wanting assistance to access job support and access jobs programs because their careers—the careers they loved—were callously cut short under the former government. They are also not sitting in their lounge room hoping that their elected representative is using their time in this House to debate and argue over matters of such a procedural nature. Why are we not talking about jobs? Why are we not talking about the economy? Why are we not talking about front-line services—the doctors, the nurses or the teachers who are, once again, providing integral services to our electorates, our communities and our state because of the actions that we have taken? Why are we not talking about working together to change the culture of domestic and family violence in our community? The member opposite could have chosen any of these issues, any topic to debate tonight in the interests of the people of Queensland and she chose reports. To say I am disappointed is an understatement.

Queenslanders deserve better. They deserve a parliament that debates the issues of importance to them: jobs, the economy, essential services, housing. Let's talk about and debate those issues. That is what this side of the House is doing each and every day. I oppose the motion.