




Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**

**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

---

Record of Proceedings, 24 February 2016

**FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (DOMESTIC SMOKE ALARMS)  
AMENDMENT BILL; FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (SMOKE ALARMS)  
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (5.34 pm): I will speak to the motion then. Quite clearly, what we have here is almost a double jeopardy in the House with this particular grab for political headlines in terms of dealing with a bill that has already been introduced by the member for Kawana. Quite clearly, this is the government's poor attempt to politically grab the high ground over the introduction of this bill. The member for Kawana, as the parliament knows, as the parliamentary portfolio committee—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Mermaid Beach, I think you have already spoken to the motion.

**Mr STEVENS:** No. I spoke on a point of order. Quite clearly, this is a sad and sorry attempt by the government in trying to grab a headline in terms of overcoming their lack of previously addressing the matter of fire alarms in this state which has cost lives. We have had submissions on the member for Kawana's bill. The portfolio committee is now addressing the initial bill that was introduced to this House by the member for Kawana. Quite clearly, the matters in that bill have to be rightly and properly discussed and debated.

Now the government have decided that they would like to lead the debate on this matter and for them to be seen to be leading the debate for purely political reasons—for no other reason than a self-serving reason, because they are not adding in any way, shape or form to the matter of substance in the bill. They are replicating the bill, as they know and as they have mentioned at the CLA they are doing. They could amend the member's bill. They know very well that, if there were amendments that were right and proper to address this very serious social problem out there, the member for Kawana would agree to their amendments—no question. If members on the opposite side can come up with some sensible, reasonable and thought out conclusions to add to the efficacy of this legislation, then I am sure the member for Kawana would most definitely add those amendments to get a better outcome to his bill. But, no, that is not what is proposed by this motion.

The motion before us now basically says, 'We want the government to take the high moral ground. We had not thought of it but, hey, the member for Kawana has a great bill. We don't want him to get any credit for the matter. Therefore, we shall take it over and call it a government bill.' Mr Speaker, as I raised with you yesterday, we saw exactly the same scenario in relation to the member for Caloundra's tobacco bill, which was very well received in terms of it being a great thing to happen. The member for Caloundra put forward a matter to this House, and members from the minor parties such as Katter's Australian Party and Independents will put forward good bills to this House. Sadly, this government deems it necessary for its own promotion, because there is nothing else promoting the government out there in the community, to put forward its own bills. We had 33 pieces of legislation in

one year—almost 20 pieces of legislation below the norm of the last 20 years—and most of that legislation was just reversing Newman government legislation. Now the government wants to say, 'We've actually done something. We've done something credible. We have grabbed the member for Kawana's bill. We have rebadged it, and we think we are fantastic about smoke alarms.'

Quite clearly, this motion should not be allowed. The CLA dealt with it, as you are aware, Mr Speaker, as chair of that particular committee. Quite clearly, the CLA dealt with the fact that it should go forward. We had a parliamentary committee that met this morning and they were not to be disturbed in relation to the CLA intervention on the matter—

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Leader of Opposition Business is making an assertion which I think misrepresents discussions of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. I would counsel him to rephrase.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Mermaid Beach.

**Mr STEVENS:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Leader of the House will have the opportunity to debate the matter when it is his turn to speak. I look forward to the reasons why he cannot add to the member for Kawana's bill rather than seeking to subvert the bill by calling it a government bill on smoke alarms. That is basically the intent of this. I will explain it again for the benefit of the Leader of the House, because sometimes I have to explain things a couple of times for him. The CLA did deal with this matter yesterday and the CLA could not agree on this matter—

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Mr STEVENS:**—and I will keep repeating myself until the Leader of the House understands the matter—because half of the committee members saw no benefit and they said that the House would have to deal with it. We have a recommendation by the House to go forward with the member for Kawana's bill. It is quite clear that the only way it would be changed would be by directions from this House. The full House agreed, including the Labor side of the House, with the portfolio committee dealing with it in the appropriate times, and it was going to come forward in a right and proper manner.

Unfortunately, there are some geniuses on the other side who said, 'No, we can't let the opposition come up with a good idea or a good process, the member for Kawana particularly.' They do not want him in charge of a matter that will look good in the eyes of the public for the safety of people throughout Queensland including fires and all the people who are supporting photoelectric fire alarms. That matter should be rightly and properly dealt with, as it is now by the portfolio committee and by people presenting to the portfolio committee. It should go forward on that basis and not be interfered with by the process projected by the Leader of the House.

There is no reason to change the portfolio committee hearings on the member for Kawana's bill before the House. Quite clearly, the presenters at the portfolio committee today who took time out of their busy schedules were rightfully concerned. I do not know how many presented today, but I am sure quite a number were very keen to present on the matter. They rightfully will wonder what is going wrong when government members want to drag them back in to talk about the same bill but with the government's fingerprints all over it—with minor additions or changes which could be achieved by amendments. It is substantially the same bill. I find it incredible that the government is stooping to overcome the fact that other members have good bills and good matters before the House. This applies to the Independents, Katter's Australian Party and to us.

In relation to the other matter, that is specifically why the motion we brought forward today was put into the House so that this matter would not be gazumped. I will not talk about that; we will talk about that motion in a debate at another time. I certainly will not be anticipating debate in that area. Quite clearly, this is a sordid, sorry attempt by the government to claim credit for what is an outstanding piece of work by the member for Kawana. The member for Caloundra's tobacco bill was treated in the same manner: 'We came up with this.' It is a very sad indictment of a government lacking any of its own ideas. Only 33 pieces of legislation were introduced into the House last year. Normally it is between 40 and 60 for most governments, even in an election year. There are no excuses. Most of that legislation was just backflipping on legislation which the previous government had passed.

There is no credit to the government in trying to bully its way over the top of this bill. Quite clearly, it is a matter for the House, but the House has already made a decision on the matter: the matter should be dealt with with appropriate time frames, which the House agreed to; portfolio committees were put in place; and presenters had the ability to come forward at those particular times. This matter should be dealt with in an appropriate manner, with the member for Kawana's bill dealt with first in a timely way. Then we can deal with the other matter: the bill which the government has brought in. The government felt such drastic change was needed that it had to bring in its own bill to address the matter.