



Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**


**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 February 2018

**MOTION**

**Sessional Orders**

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (5.49 pm): I rise to oppose the amendment to the sessional orders moved by the Manager of Opposition Business and member for Kawana, and to support the sessional orders as provided and moved in this House by the Leader of the House earlier today. We heard earlier from the member for Kawana and other members with their moaning and whingeing about having to come down here on a Sunday night. They also used language like ‘dictatorship’ and ‘arrogance’.

I say two words to the member for Toowoomba North: Campbell Newman. There was a man who ran a dictatorship and was full of arrogance. As a regional member I say that we in the north by our very nature—and you, Mr Speaker, are a fellow regional member, and I touched on it this morning—are a bit different. Even ‘Costo’ would agree with that! I mean no disrespect to my fellow MPs—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Thuringowa, can you please use members’ titles as appropriate.

**Mr HARPER:** I am sure the member for Whitsunday would agree that we are a different breed in North Queensland—some of us are, anyway. I am still struggling to accept the words spoken by the member for Burdekin on Tuesday. It was an absolutely denigrating and disgraceful way to start this parliament—denigrating you, Mr Speaker, a fellow regional member, in your former role. He should apologise.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member, please remain relevant to the debate at hand about sessional orders.

**Mr HARPER:** I return to the motion. We are different. As fellow regional MPs we regularly travel long distances to Brisbane for parliamentary sittings and portfolio committee work. I wholeheartedly support the motion. It is just common sense. Let me tell honourable members why. As the proudly re-elected member for Thuringowa and a regional member, I know that travel is just a part of the job. I regularly travel down here and I have seen the member for Gregory down here on a Sunday night as well. Some of us already travel here on Sunday nights. The amendment to sessional orders that would make changes to sitting days, for example, on Wednesdays would allow us, the members of those committees, to do more work on Mondays. That makes sense as well. I speak as the chair of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee, which I am personally invested in. I know these changes to sessional orders will allow us to work on a Monday, and that again makes sense to me.

As members of this parliament, we are paid to work, and work hard we should, for the people who entrusted us to represent them in this place. One has only to turn to our ministers and Premier who meet for cabinet on a Monday. Therefore, I ask: why should we not conduct our portfolio committee work on a Monday as well? It would allow us to get on with the business of the parliament during the scheduled sitting days without interruption to the week. Again I say that as a regional member I support the motion moved by the Leader of the House regarding the sessional orders for the 56th Parliament.

As members of parliament we have a duty to serve not only our constituents but all Queenslanders in a manner which is open and transparent. Members understand the importance of standing up for our electorates in our state's parliament, advocating for their issues to better our local communities. I believe these enhanced sessional orders will enable a more streamlined running of this House by allowing three full days of parliament to be held on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. While I understand the concerns of some that moving the committee process to Monday from Wednesday will somehow disadvantage regional members as they may have to travel on a Sunday, I think not. Like I said, I already travel on a Sunday. I have seen plenty of other members here on a Sunday evening preparing for the Monday during a sitting week as well. That cannot be an excuse. We are elected to this House to serve our constituency, and part of that process is to attend the sittings of parliament and associated parliamentary committees. If that means travelling on a Sunday rather than on a Monday morning, that is simply what we have to do. However, it should be noted that travelling on a Sunday evening may not be required, as the member for Logan pointed out, as some committees will set their times so they can meet later on a Monday morning, allowing for travel to Brisbane on the Monday morning.

*(Time expired)*