



Speech By  
**Bart Mellish**


**MEMBER FOR ASPLEY**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2018

## MOTION

### Amendments to Sessional Orders

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (12.36 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the House. I am glad that there is at least one House still running in this country after the sad events we have seen in Canberra this morning. It is a very sad day when at 11 am the House of Representatives adjourns without even getting to question time. Who knows what will happen when they come back. One of four or five people could be Prime Minister. It is like a bad episode of *The Bachelor*. Who knows who will get the goods at the end of the day?

These proposed amendments to the sessional orders are sensible changes which will ensure that this House can do what it intends to do and what we were elected to do. Distilled down, that is debate policy, and debate and pass legislation. It is what the community expect and what they actually elected us to do. We are here to pass through this place good legislation that will benefit the community as it is enacted. At the last election the community elected a majority Labor government to do just that. Sometimes, sadly, this place can get sidetracked.

Recently I have witnessed members of this House trying to deliberately frustrate the operations of this House and of the elected government of the day in its legislative agenda. Ideally, we would not need to be moving these amendments to the sessional orders. Ideally, this parliament should be able to function effectively as it currently is, but clearly the current tactics—

**Mr Watts** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Toowoomba North.

**Mr MELLISH:**—of those opposite are to drag on and on certain debates to try to make some twisted point about the functioning of this place not for policy reasons and not even for useful political reasons. It is some sort of misguided quest to frustrate and stymie the effective functioning of this House. Filibustering and delaying to try to provoke the government for its own sake is not productive. I recall one debate when there were pointless points of order after pointless points of order with the sole intention of trying to run the clock down. These are sensible measures we are debating which will allow this House to get on and do the job.

Just like running a business, a community group or even a school, there are parameters and guidelines in place to ensure the effective running of any activity. We all know that this place already has guidelines and rules on how we operate. We have set times for question time, adjournments, private members statements—all examples of how this House governs itself by setting times and guidelines.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my left.

**Mr MELLISH:** The motion before this House today continues on this path and allows the parliament to set time frames for the consideration of specified government bills and government motions. I reiterate: it will allow the parliament to set time frames.

While the Business Committee will have bipartisan representation, it is a consultative committee. It is a committee which will come together to discuss how much time will be allocated for the bills of the week. The outcomes of that committee will then come to this chamber. The Leader of the House will move a motion and the parliament as a whole will be able to consider and debate the business program of the week. Then a vote will occur. The House as a collective sets the course of the actions in the House, and the motion before the House today further strengthens the ability of the House to set its own agenda. The motion before us today is about restoring the level of debate, encouraging a contest of ideas rather than abusive rabble, maintaining a level of courtesy around our policy differences and ensuring voices are heard on the issues of the day.

I commend the Leader of the House for bringing this sensible proposal to the House and for her ongoing sensible management of the House. This is in stark contrast to what we are seeing in Canberra today, which, as I mentioned earlier, is not even a functioning parliament at this point in time. I commend the motion to the House. I encourage all members to support the motion.