



Speech By  
**Linus Power**


**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 February 2018

**MOTION**

**Sessional Orders**

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (5.37 pm): In 1863 at a coalfield in Pennsylvania there were two speeches made. One went for four hours.

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I have already asked you to keep your contributions relevant.

**Mr POWER:** He did not get interjections in these speeches either. One went for four hours and another went for two minutes, or 272 words in total. We know which one was remembered. The Gettysburg address which was spoken by President Lincoln took only 272 words, but those words are remembered and had meaning for people. We can communicate meaningfully in a very short period of time in this chamber, and I would suggest that we should do that as much as possible. However, as has been said—and I do not wish to be completely repetitious, unlike the member for Kawana—these sessional orders give more time than any other state jurisdiction for the debate of government business, with 26 hours of debate.

I notice that the member for Mermaid Beach in his interesting speech made no attempt to say that the alternative has any more hours. We have 26 hours of debate. I assure the crossbenchers that, once they have heard the member for Kawana go for 26 hours, they will be wishing that we had truncated it more and they will ask that speeches only be 276 words. That is not the case with the sessional orders that we have. We have 26 hours of debate and I think we can make a great contribution on the important issues.

In the last term, this was canvassed backwards and forwards informally and formally between the parties. It is certainly something that outside of the chamber and committees the member for Mermaid Beach and I spoke about in terms of needing to improve the hours of the House to ensure that we worked sensible hours. This is something that has been a long-term discussion between the parties which has been blocked by a strange group within the leadership of the LNP who for some reason want to block this.

The public rightly do not understand why we have meetings that start at 6 am or 7 am and continue through until 1 am, 2 am or 3 am and then ultimately take our most important act—that is, of casting our votes on that important legislation—at that time. This should be a place that is not a test of endurance or exhaustion. That is not what this is about.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr POWER:** Exactly. It should be about debating ideas when people are listening. It should be about debating ideas coherently, directly and without repetition. All of our energy should be about getting the right legislation. Writing speeches that few will listen to late in the night does not actually contribute to that.

I heard that the new opposition leader has claimed to have changed, but what I have heard today are all of the same things about blocking this. They are exactly the same as the Newman-Seeney years of opposition to these ideas. We need to actually go further and progress this debate in this parliament. The member for Nanango can actually show that she has changed if she supports this motion.

As the chair of a committee, I am confident that, although none of my committee members represent electorates that are within the boundaries of Brisbane city, we will all be able to find a time on a Monday to meet. We have all of Monday and the flexibility of the committee. As the member for Mermaid Beach knows, I am an accommodating chairperson. We will find a time throughout that whole day for the committee to meet and for all of the committee members to come from outside Brisbane. I am confident that members from outside of Brisbane in almost all cases will be able to do that.

We have also heard that Wednesdays are sacrosanct. Committees are sacrosanct. The process of committees debating intensely the legislation is very, very important. That process of hearing from the public is very important, but whether it is on a Wednesday or a Monday is not the key point. The key point is that we have that process of the committees and I feel confident that the Mondays will give us that chance to do it.

I endorse these changes. I think rationally everyone outside thinks that working these hours is more sensible. We will not get off. We will still attend functions here with members of the public after hours where we will be speaking to them about the ideas that matter in this place. I urge members to support these changes to make this a better parliament.

**Mr Watts** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Toowoomba North, you are warned under standing order 253A. I have asked you repeatedly to stop your loud interjections across the chamber.