



Speech By  
**Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe**


**MEMBER FOR SANDGATE**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 February 2018

**MOTION**

**Sessional Orders**

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.58 pm): At the conclusion of this debate, I want to have a chance to reflect on what seems to be the key critiques of the proposal of the Leader of the House for changes to sessional orders for the 56th Parliament. I do that in the context of the amendment moved by the Manager of Opposition Business. In essence there seems to be four critiques of what has been proposed by the government. One is that it is some measure of laziness on behalf of the government; that the changes to the sessional orders are proving that the government is somehow going to be lazy. Second, there has been a concern expressed about reduced time for opposition and crossbench business. There is a concern about that. Third, there is a view that it is some sort of socialist plot; it is a Labor plot about giving Brisbane MPs access to P&C meetings. Fourth, it is also being proposed that this is going to have a terrible impact on people's Sunday nights, particularly regional members, and I understand that concern that people talk about.

Let me deal with those four issues and wipe them away. The first argument deals with laziness. The alternative set of sessional orders proposed by the Manager of Opposition Business would see us sitting for an extra half hour on two days, but if we return to committees meeting on Wednesday mornings it means that the parliament would actually be sitting less time, so the 'laziness' argument is destroyed.

The second argument is that there would be reduced time for opposition and crossbenchers, but we have to examine this in context. We do not just compare what happened in the 55th Parliament to what happened in the 56th. We have to compare what the government is proposing for the 56th Parliament with governments as they have been over a number of years and then compare and contrast it to the 54th Parliament in particular. Let me say that this provides significant opportunities for all members of parliament, including opposition and crossbench members, to have their say. It goes back to the norm of there being one private member's motion a week. Whenever there has been a majority government there has been one private member's motion per week. If there is any other suggestion or pretence then someone is trying to fool you. During the minority government in the last parliament let's look at how the opposition dealt with and treated crossbenchers in that space. They did not get the same time. This is all about opposition grandstanding. When we look at private members' statements before question time, that was all about opposition grandstanding. It was never about crossbenchers getting a chance, so do not be fooled.

The third argument relates to a socialist Labor plot to allow Brisbane members to go to P&C meetings if the House rises at 7.30, which only demonstrates the fact that the member for Mermaid Beach and the member for Gregory have never been to a P&C meeting. If you leave this place and go to my electorate in Sandgate, which is a 45-minute drive away, by the time you get to the electorate the P&C meeting is over. With the efficient P&Cs that we have these days, their meetings are finished.

People know what they are doing and they use their time efficiently. The key thing is that they do not make decisions way into the late hours of the night. That is the exact critique that any of those P&Cs would make about the hours over which this parliament has unfortunately conducted its business for too many years.

Finally, let's come to the absolutely fallacious point about the impact on Sundays and Sunday nights. If we look at the sessional orders that are before us they say nothing about Mondays—

**An opposition member:** Committee meetings!

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Yes, because committees can determine when they meet. They do not need to meet at the same time as they met on Wednesday mornings. They can meet at a time of their choosing. There is also an opportunity for party rooms and the caucus or other meetings to be held later in the day. There is nothing sacrosanct about those meetings being held at those particular times. Be flexible and responsive and modernise this parliament by supporting the Leader of the House's sessional orders and defeating—

*(Time expired)*