




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2018

MOTION

Amendments to Sessional Orders

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (12.00 pm): I seek leave to alter the terms of the notice of motion regarding the amendments to the sessional orders circulated in my name earlier today by inserting a new sessional order 2B(5), which I have circulated.

Leave granted.

Mrs D'ATH: I seek to insert after proposed new sessional order 2B(4) a new paragraph (5), which will read, 'Any amendment agreed to in (4) above is to take effect one hour after the House agrees to such an amendment.' I move—

That the amendments to sessional orders circulated in my name be agreed to, effective from 3 September 2018.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE SESSIONAL ORDERS OF THE 56th PARLIAMENT

1. In Sessional Order 1(c), delete from "**Tuesday**" to the first occurring "accordingly.)" and insert:

Tuesday

*9.30am—10.15am—Preliminary Business **

Prayers

Messages from the Governor

Matters concerning privilege

Speaker's Statements

Appointments

Petitions

Citizen's Right of Reply

Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk

Ministerial Papers

Ministerial Notices of Motion

Ministerial Statements

Any other Government Business

Personal Explanations

Tabling of Reports

Notice of motion for disallowance of statutory instrument

10.15am—11.15 am—

Question Time

11.15am—11.35am—

Business Program Motion (in accordance with Sessional Order 2B)

11.35am—1.00pm—

Government Business

1.00pm—2.00pm—

Lunch break

2.00pm—3.00pm—

Matters of Public Interest

3.00pm—5.30pm—

Government Business

5.30pm—7.00pm—

Disallowance Motions, Private Members' Bills or Government Business (in accordance with Sessional Order 1(d))

7.00pm—7.30pm—

Automatic Adjournment

* (If completed before 10.15 am, Question Time will commence earlier and continue for 1 hour with starting times for all other items, except lunch breaks, in the Order of Business adjusting accordingly.)'

2. After Sessional Order 2, insert:

'Business committee

2A (1) A Business Committee comprising the following members is established:

(a) the Leader of the House (or alternate);

(b) Premier (or alternate);

(c) the Manager of Opposition Business (or alternate); and

(d) the cross-bench member nominated under s.81 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* (or alternate).

(2) The role of the Business Committee is to aim to agree how the House will deal with government business.

(3) Any decisions made by the Business Committee in accordance with (2) are not binding on the House and a Business program motion in accordance with 2B is required.

(4) In this Sessional Order "alternate", in relation to a member, has the same meaning as in section 81 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*.

(5) At a meeting of the Business Committee a quorum is the Leader of the House (or alternate) and one other member.

(6) A meeting of the Business Committee is chaired by the Leader of the House (or alternate).

Business program motion

2B (1) At the time specified in the Sessional Orders, the Leader of the House may move a motion without notice that provides for the allocation of time for any proceedings on a government Bill or any other government business.

(2) The motion may include a requirement that at the expiration of time specified in (1) all remaining questions necessary to pass the Bill, a stage of the Bill or any other government business be put, without further debate, which is taken to include any of the following:

(a) the second reading question;

(b) clauses and schedules en bloc;

(c) any amendments to be moved by the minister in charge of the Bill; and

(d) the third reading and long title.

(3) Completion of all questions necessary to pass the Bill, a stage of the Bill or any other government business in accordance with (1) and (2) shall take precedence over all other business, including the automatic adjournment, with the Order of Business adjusting to recommence after necessary questions are completed.

(4) Any agreed Business Program may be amended by a motion without notice, moved by the Leader of the House.

(5) Any amendment agreed to in (4) above is to take effect one hour after the House agrees to such an amendment.

3. In Sessional Order 8, in the schedule after the section detailing the time for Motions insert:

Motions—Business Program Motion (11.15 am Tuesdays) and Amendments to Business Program Motion	Sessional Order 1 and 2B	
– Mover		5 minutes
– Other members		5 minutes
– Total debate		20 minutes or when four speakers have concluded

4. In Sessional Order 8, in the schedule after the section detailing the time for Private Members' Motions omit '(Wednesday 6.00–7.00 pm)' and insert '(Wednesday 5.00-6.00pm)'

In moving these amendments today, as foreshadowed during the last sitting week, the government is proposing that a cross-parliamentary committee be established to manage the flow of government business in this House called a Business Committee. This Business Committee will comprise the Leader of the House, a government member nominated by the Premier, the Manager of Opposition Business and a member of the crossbench, or alternate members in their place.

The government will continue to determine what government bills will be debated each sitting week, and on a Monday the Business Committee will meet to discuss how long the Legislative Assembly should set to deal with various pieces of legislation. This committee will be a non-binding, informative committee, where members would attend and put their view forward regarding how many speakers they require based on, for example, whether the bill is technical and non-contentious in nature and supported or whether the bill is complex and significant and needing longer for debate.

As Leader of the House, I would move a motion in this chamber on a Tuesday morning, post question time, putting a business program to the House for that week, with 20 minutes of debate being allowed. This means that the destiny of the House will be determined by the House. Similar to Victoria, once the time frames agreed to by the House have been met, if the bills which are specified in the motion have not been completed then the remaining questions will be put en bloc.

The sessional orders will allow for amendments to the business program. A special meeting of the Business Committee may be undertaken and the Leader of the House, at the end of the meeting, would circulate the amendments and then move the amendments in the House, with a 20-minute debate or until four speakers have spoken. Once passed, the amended program would take effect one hour after it was passed which would be built into the amended motion, but, as we have just moved, it is the intention to have that reflected in the sessional orders as well.

Each sitting week we come into this chamber and we debate bills to modernise our legislation to ensure that it is keeping pace with modern standards. This motion does exactly that. Just as the laws we debate should reflect community expectations, so should the laws and rules which govern how the people's house operates. Victoria changed their standing orders 25 years ago in 1993, under the Kennett Liberal government. It is now time that the Queensland parliament considers modernising the way in which we operate.

When we come together today to debate this motion, I think it is an opportunity to ask all of us to reflect on the public's perception of politicians and of what we actually do in this parliament. Have a look around us at what is happening in Canberra today. No matter how popular any individual or government of the day might be, the perception of politicians out there generally is very cynical. We can blame society. We can blame the media. We can blame a whole lot of things for that cynicism. The reality is that ultimately it starts with us and our behaviour and the way we conduct ourselves.

Members do have a right to speak in this chamber on behalf of their electorates, but we also have an obligation to have meaningful and considered contributions to debate. That does not mean that we cannot have a robust debate—have a bit of a fun, have a few jokes, have a bit of banter. In fact, it is probably needed for our sanity because it is not an easy job that we do. That does not mean that we cannot work together when we should on important issues to the people of Queensland and have more cooperation in the way that the parliament goes about its business. It is what the people of Queensland not just expect but want to see from their elected representatives.

We are ultimately here at the will of the people of Queensland. Just as we will debate the multicultural motion this afternoon—and I will not go to the content of that—there are times when we must come together in the best interests of the people of Queensland to have these important discussions. We must look at the expectations of the public and what they want versus what they perceive they are actually getting from this parliament and reflect on that. We want to see, and the general public want to see, in this parliament a contest of ideas, not a contest of personalities. We want to see genuine debate—meaningful, considered debate. This House, this system of parliament, deserves this but, more importantly, the people of Queensland deserve that we approach our roles in this way.

I have heard in previous debates about changes to hours of debate that every member has a right to speak on behalf of their electorate. That is right. We all are here representing our individual electorates, but when we make these statements we also need to be clear that that right is not absolute or unfettered. We operate within a structure in this House. We operate under sessional orders and standing orders of the parliament of Queensland.

To say that this takes away our absolute right as elected members to speak is not correct. The fact is that on every given day of this parliament we have structure put around our debates. It is not the case that every elected member of this parliament gets the right to come in here and put a question to the government in question time every single day. There is a set time for that debate. It is not the case

that every member who would like to speak on the private member's motion at 5 pm on a Wednesday gets to speak on it, because it is a one-hour debate. We have time limitations set around how we debate our business and our motions. It is not an absolute right. It is not an unfettered right.

We operate within a structure, a system, to ensure that we are fulfilling our obligations to the people of Queensland and this parliament. That is what this motion does in changing the sessional orders and putting in place the Business Committee. It is about putting a structure around how we debate bills and ensure that those bills are being dealt with by the people of Queensland. We owe it to the people to do this.

Over my 11 years in parliament at different levels I have talked about the level of respect that parliamentarians should show each other in this chamber, how we conduct ourselves and what sort of image or perception we portray to those who come in and watch in person, those who listen and those who watch us from home on the parliament website. We must remember that we are not here for ourselves; we are here for the people of Queensland.

These new sessional orders and this Business Committee will not change overnight that perception of what people think of politicians nowadays, but I hope it goes some way to start to change the perception of what we do in this House every week and that we are doing it in the best interests of the people of Queensland and not in our self-interest. We owe the people of Queensland meaningful, considered debate and a contest of ideas. Sitting down collectively and sharing information is something that no government has ever done. Actually sharing the plan for the week openly and transparently—

Mrs Frecklington: You do not believe this.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you will make your comments through the chair or, as per my earlier rulings today, you will be warned under the standing orders.

Mrs D'ATH: I will take that interjection. I could not believe in this more than I do. Every speech I have made over 11 years talks about this sort of respect. This is a good model.

(Time expired)