



Speech By **Dale Last**

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 3 September 2019

MOTION

Business Program

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (11.30 am): I rise to speak in support of my colleague the member for Kawana in opposing this motion. If this government continues on this pathway, we will be starting parliament at morning tea and we will be gone by lunchtime. We only have to look at this week's agenda: a late start on Wednesday and a five o'clock finish on Thursday. Why are we finishing at five o'clock on Thursday? It would not be anything to do with getting back to Brisbane on Thursday night, would it? Those on this side of the House will stay here until the cows come home, if necessary, to speak to legislation. We are not afraid to roll up our sleeves and work until the debate is finished. I think the members of the public who are sitting in the gallery would have that expectation.

We are paid to be in this place to debate legislation, to have our say and represent our constituents. The average population of constituencies across this state is around 33,000. If 10 of us do not get the opportunity to speak, 330,000 people in this state do not get the opportunity to have their voice heard in parliament. I take my role as the member for Burdekin very seriously. I know that in the gallery this week there will be constituents who have driven from Clermont—a six- or seven-hour drive—to watch this parliament. They deserve the right to hear the debate. They deserve the right to hear all the members in this parliament. They deserve the right for their local member to get up and represent them—to have their say and put forward the viewpoints of their constituents who are raising their concerns. Why should someone who lives in Clermont be treated any differently from someone who lives in Aspley or, heaven forbid, West End in Brisbane?

The Premier said that it was important that people in regional Queensland got the opportunity to see our democratic process in person. This is not a democratic process. The Attorney-General just said that it was much more efficient and much more effective to have our debate guillotined. I bet the people sitting in the gallery do not think that. I bet those students sitting in the gallery cannot believe that we are putting time frames on the debate, that members in this place are not being allowed to get up—

Mrs Frecklington: That's why they walked out on the minister.

Mr LAST: That is exactly right. I take that interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. Those people in the gallery would have the expectation that, when it comes to debating legislation in this place, each and every member would have the right to get up to contribute to that debate. I bet they cannot believe that a large number of MPs cannot get on their feet and have their say this week when we are talking about legislation.

I move now to the subject of what we are debating this week. Would we not think that we would be debating the reef protection bill, or the Galilee Basin bill, which is about the resource sector in Queensland? We back our resource sector and we back our farmers. This morning, there were 500 of them outside here. Did the minister or the Premier go out and address them? Not a chance! We should be debating that bill in Townsville this week, because this reef protection bill will have the biggest impact

on our farmers in North Queensland. Those farmers out there this morning, with their backs to the walls, would have relished the opportunity to watch this debate unfold in this place this week, to hear from our side about the impact that this legislation is going to have on their livelihoods.

Instead, the members opposite bury the reef protection bill and they do not want to talk about the Galilee Basin and opening up the resource sector—‘Let’s not go there in regional Queensland. We might not get a lot of brownie points if we start talking about that.’ There is a golden opportunity here in Townsville this week to debate legislation that has a direct impact on this community. If the members opposite want to talk about this community, where is the debate on crime? Where is the debate on jobs? Where is the debate on the cost of living? Where are the debates on the big-ticket items that need to be talked about in this community? We are not interested in the shiny baubles, all the ribbon cutting and all the little functions and events that are going on. We are here to work and we are here to debate the legislation. That is what we are about on this side of the House.