




Speech By
Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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MOTION

Business Program

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (11.25 am): The Leader of the House mentions the *Notice Paper*. Who knows what happens on the *Notice Paper* anymore? When I woke up this morning, local government electoral reform was the first item of business on the *Notice Paper*. I went to bed last night having just attended the Business Committee meeting, where I had been told that the local government reform legislation would be the first bills to be debated cognately today. As I said, when I woke up this morning I saw the *Notice Paper* that is distributed to all honourable members. That *Notice Paper* was pursuant to what I was told yesterday. Then I received a text message saying that we would now be proceeding with the police discipline legislation.

It really begs the question: what on earth are we having these ridiculous Business Committee meetings for? Every Monday night I waste 30 minutes of my life attending a meeting with the Leader of the House and the Minister for Health—particularly the Minister for Health, being that that is an absolute waste of time. I am wasting my time, because it changes. Things change from the meeting to bedtime and then when we get up for brekkie in the morning. Things will change again because at some point shortly the Leader of the House will have to move another motion to change the agenda for the day to put the police discipline bill before the local government electoral reform legislation.

The Leader of the House says that it is important that the local government minister is here. Yes, because it is his blooming bill! I would expect the local government minister to be here. The only reason he is in Cairns this morning is because they are announcing that they are getting rid of compulsory preferential voting for local government elections through that piece of legislation. He wanted to get the cheers and claps from the local government mayors and miss parliament. That is why he is in Cairns.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There is a convention in this House to not reflect on the absence of members.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, please do not mention members who are not in the House.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There is a convention but, as the Speaker advised the parliament last time, the convention relates to specifically mentioning when a member is not sitting in a particular chair at any given time. If a member is absent from parliament, as has been advised by the Premier in relation to the minister, that is not pursuant to the convention that the Attorney raises. In her own speech the Attorney has just mentioned the absence of the minister. Mr Deputy Speaker, I am just seeking clarification. As I understand it, the convention specifically deals with when a member may have absented himself or herself from the chamber at any given time, but the minister is actually absent and the Premier was answering his questions in question time this morning.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Kawana. I will take counsel. Member for Kawana, I have listened to what you have said. I think that the point of order refers more to being critical of the member's absence. I ask you not to be critical of that member's absence from the House.

Mr BLEIJIE: This morning the local government minister announced that they are getting rid of compulsory preferential voting through the legislation that we are going to be debating this week. We ought to have more than six hours debate time. If we divide it in two we have three hours debate time on a cognate debate for electoral reform, and no-one has to say anything more than the member for Bundamba, who has been fighting the Ipswich City Council. We have people in jail because of issues with councils across Queensland, yet we get three hours to debate the CCC recommendations on Belcarra.

Yes it is a cognate debate of six hours, but that essentially means three hours debate time—if you divide the six hours by two—for the electoral reform bill and for the Belcarra bill which deals with fighting corruption in councils across Queensland. I do not think that a six-hour cognate debate is enough time to fully look at the issues. I have looked at the speaking list for these bills and I would say that given the number of members who have put their names down to speak on these important matters we will well and truly go over the six-hour debate time.

Again, we are going to have another debate of an important issue like we had last sitting week with the Great Barrier Reef regulation bill where seven members were gagged and not given the opportunity to speak—I table that speaking list.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, speaking list titled 'GBR Bill' [1830](#).

We also had the cognate debate on the Medicines and Poisons Bill where more members were not able to speak. I table a copy of that speaking list.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, speaking list titled 'Cognate Poisons and Medicines Bill' [1831](#).

The whole thing is a farce. The whole Business Committee motion is a farce. We go into the Business Committee meeting and the Leader of the House sets out the government's agenda and then it changes willy-nilly the next day. It is not acceptable. If they are going to continue to do that then we should get rid of the Business Committee meetings, get rid of the Business Committee motion and go back to the old days—the government says what is going to happen in the parliament, as they do anyway. Nothing has changed other than they are wasting everyone's time with all these other silly meetings so they can say they are consulting and being proactive. The member for Noosa, who was at the meeting yesterday, would have heard exactly what I heard. That was that the local government electoral bills were going to be debated first up this morning and then we would move on to debate the police discipline bill. Now we have the other situation.

The reason the government is amending the local government reforms on the fly and taking compulsory preferential voting out is that they have heard that compulsory preferential voting in the Brisbane City Council election may lose Labor seats because of Green preferences. Now they do not want the preferences. They now do not want compulsory preferential voting. For state government elections they said we had to have compulsory preferential voting. For local government elections they said we had to have it because we had to be consistent with state government elections, but now we do not need consistency. Local government will continue to have optional preferential voting because they have worked out the numbers and it will not benefit them in the Brisbane City Council election.

That is the reason we are delaying the debate on these bills. The reason the debate is being curtailed is that they do not want to debate the real issues, the political issues at hand here. The Labor government will change any electoral law they think will benefit them—local, federal or state. They will change the electoral system to benefit them. It is disgraceful.