




Speech By
Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 22 October 2019

MOTION

Non-Government Members, Resources

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (12.51 pm): I can see what the government wants to do. It wants to get all of these issues out of the way today because the motion on the *Notice Paper* was meant to be moved for debate tomorrow. It was interesting listening to the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer of the state talk about the Crime and Corruption Commission recommendations. The reason the Crime and Corruption Commission made those recommendations that the Deputy Premier spoke about was because of the Deputy Premier's actions when she thought she would look at the allowances under the budgetary process herself. Members will recall that when we were looking at the relief staff budget for our hardworking electorate officers the Treasurer made the comment that she was going to give with one hand and take with the other, and then of course the CCC made the recommendation that the Treasurer and Deputy Premier ought not have the power to be able to do that.

There is a real contradiction here. I am going to seek a ruling, Mr Deputy Speaker Weir, on this from you, because there is a motion that has just passed the parliament with respect to the Ethics Committee report. The Ethics Committee report made the recommendation that the Committee of the Legislative Assembly consider developing guidelines for determining resources for the crossbench. The motion moved by the member for Traeger at item No. 7 calls on the government to amend the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act to give the QIRT the function of declaring the resources for non-government members. Is this motion talking about all non-government members—that is, the shadow ministry and the opposition leader's office? The opposition office and shadow ministers come under the Ministerial Services Branch, but this motion contradicts what the House just decided with respect to the Legislative Assembly.

Ms Trad: No, it wasn't.

Mr BLEIJIE: If the government is supporting this motion, perhaps it may want to clarify when talking about the QIRT determining the functions and deciding resources for non-government members when the Ethics Committee report highlighted crossbench members. Are we now talking about the QIRT determining for non-government members—that is, opposition members? That would include opposition travel, opposition shadow minister travel—

Ms Trad: It's all about the travel.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the Deputy Premier. This is serious because the Committee of the Legislative Assembly has already met with the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal about such matters and I would hate to think that we have moved a motion which contradicts a motion that the House has just determined and decided on, so all I am seeking is clarification. If the government is supporting this motion and will legislate for the remuneration tribunal to look at these issues, then all we are seeking is clarification of who it applies to. If it is that the motion applies to every member of this House, that is fine. I understand that. All I am seeking is clarification as to whether, as the Deputy Premier has said with regard to the fact that the Premier has looked into this, the government is going to support this motion and to let us know how it is not a contradiction.

If the Committee of the Legislative Assembly is not now determining these matters and if it is the QIRT, then members should have the right to know. Perhaps the Katter party may want to clarify, if it has further speakers to this motion, with regard to item No. 7 in terms of the resources for non-government members, because that will change the way the Ministerial Services Branch operates with the opposition office and all of the resources for the opposition office and staffing resources which the QIRT, the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal, has said to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly that it is not responsible for. If it is going to be responsible for it, all we are seeking is clarification. If it applies to everyone, that is fine. We just seek some form of clarification on that because the Ethics Committee report said that the Committee of the Legislative Assembly should look at the issues with respect to the crossbench, and that is at the heart of the debate here about the crossbenchers and having their resources taken away by the government.

I agreed with the Crime and Corruption Commission at the time when it put out the report saying that the government should not willy-nilly, just because it may have heard something that a member of parliament said that it disagreed with, take away a right of that member, because it does impugn the rights and liberties of members of the House. It is quite serious and, as I said, before determining one way or another—before we determine whether we are supportive or otherwise of this motion, and I understand the background to the motion that was going to be moved tomorrow—we are simply just seeking clarification from not only the mover but also the government, which is supporting the motion. Does it apply to every member of the House, including the opposition office, which comes under the Ministerial Services Branch, because that is quite different to what the Ethics Committee had recommended in the report that we have only just debated and discussed in the House?