




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Record of Proceedings, 26 February 2019

MOTION

Business Program

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (11.29 am): Again I rise to support the Manager of Opposition Business in opposing a motion that is a deliberate and absolutely shameful guillotining of the debate to be had on bills. Time and time again we have debated this matter. Last week, I was denied free speech in this House by the guillotining of the bill on the very waste tax that is going to inflict a two per cent rise in the rates charged by the Gold Coast City Council in the next rate notices to come out. They are putting their waste tax on my residents in Mermaid Beach. That is why I need to speak on this motion. We could not be fitted into that debate. The Manager of Opposition Business had given the government the list and I cannot jump other speakers. There is no priority for me. The Leader of the House said that, if 93 members had an opportunity to speak on a matter for a minimum of 10 minutes, it would take 930 minutes. That is a lot longer than the 5½ hours allocated last time.

We have been allocated four hours to debate the fisheries bill. I assure the House that many of our members would like to speak on the fisheries bill, which is coming up this week. Unless it is guillotined—which it will be—the debate would take a lot longer than four hours. We have been allocated five hours to debate human rights, which is a major issue for Queenslanders. It is a major issue for our future. It is also a major issue for the legal system in terms of the breaking down of matters in Queensland. We should have every opportunity to clearly debate it in this House.

We are not a rubber stamp for this government. I am elected to represent the people of Mermaid Beach. I want the opportunity to talk for a minimum of 10 minutes. I would like more, but obviously under our new regime 10 minutes is good. I would like 10 minutes to talk on behalf of the people of Mermaid Beach. That opportunity is being denied by the arrogant Palaszczuk government, which is displaying all the hubris of a government that wants to shut down the House. They do not want any problems aired in the House, because that would look bad for the Palaszczuk government and might damage the image of 'Aunty Perfect'.

This is a deliberate political tactic to quieten the voice of the opposition under the Westminster system. That is totally shameful. Even the fourth estate should be disappointed at the fact that the government of the day is shutting down debate here in the people's house—that is, the House where all representatives should have the opportunity to have their voices heard on legislation before us. Members will have a particular interest in different pieces of legislation and will want to speak on those bills.

The one reason this government does not want debate is that it would expose their incapacity to cover all matters. They are hungry for money. They want to shut down all speech in this House so that they can pass things such as the waste tax, which was passed last week following the guillotining of the debate. They do not want scrutiny of their mad tax grab. It does not matter whether it is poker machines on the Gold Coast, a waste tax, a tax on cars—

Mr Krause: A tax on wagering.

Mr STEVENS: A tax on wagering; that is absolutely correct. It is a tax, tax, tax regime. They are using the guillotine system in this House to stop that being highlighted by the opposition, including by, for example, the member for Mermaid Beach.

If this motion is passed, I will be very disappointed that not all members will be able to speak to legislation, particularly the fisheries bill that will impact a lot of residents in areas right across Queensland. I will be very disappointed if we have only four hours of debate on that bill. Of that four hours, the government takes up half an hour either end of the debate. In other words, thanks very much for the three hours that we have to split between their members and ours. If they want to give us five hours, that is fine, but they do not.

This is a deliberate tactic to shut down debate, ruining this palace of democracy that we are privileged to have been elected to. It is a shameful exercise in hubris and arrogance that is being demonstrated by this government. I hope that the fourth estate brings it home to the people of Queensland that this government is bereft of proper morals and ethics in relation to the operation of this House. The government needs to rejig and rethink the whole process of shutting down and guillotining these motions.

Mr O'Connor interjected.

Mr STEVENS: I thank the member for Bonney. He is doing a bit of riding here. I am getting to the winning post, bringing it home.