




Speech By
Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

Record of Proceedings, 22 October 2019

MOTION

Non-Government Members, Resources

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (3.24 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion. This reform is part of that broad suite of reforms that support and enhance Queensland's democracy and the capability of this parliament to do its work for the people of Queensland. I acknowledge the contributions of previous speakers who have seen that and put this in the context of a broad suite of matters. I will put that maybe into a broader suite.

We heard members talk about the last 30 years, representing that period where Queensland modernised. This is yet another step as part of modernising Queensland, our political and parliamentary institutions in order to better serve the people of this state. Let us be clear: members on all sides, including crossbenchers, currently have a level of resourcing. That did not always exist in the history of this parliament. The concept of electorate officers and electorate office staff was only introduced in the mid-1970s. I am given some advice that the allocation was originally for one staff member, one desk, one chair and one filing cabinet. That was the nature of the office allocation for electorate office staff when that was first instituted in the 1970s.

There is a level of resources for all members of parliament across the board, but it is good to see the way in which that has progressed and been added to where it is appropriate to add to the debate and capacity of this parliament and chamber to debate issues important to the state of Queensland. That is why I very much welcome the moves and the measure that the Premier has taken to support this motion before the House. For the avoidance of doubt—because there has been a bit of misunderstanding by some people here—the government supports the intent of this motion. The Premier has indicated in her correspondence with the Ethics Committee that she will step in to transfer the decision-making in respect of staffing for crossbench members to an entity independent of government. The correspondence states—

I will take whatever steps are necessary and possible to transfer decision-making in respect of staffing for crossbench members of Parliament to an entity independent of the government of the day such as the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal.

There will be no changes of resourcing for the opposition; that is not the intent of the government's actions here. That is why it is important that we clarify that matter. It is equally important that we follow the spirit of what is before us in this motion in terms of continuing that commitment to the Fitzgerald report, its precepts and its establishment of the modernising of Queensland to which Labor governments have made the singular greatest contribution over the past 30 years. That is what we continue to do in this commitment to this reform today. That is significant, because we have seen what has occurred on other occasions when other parties held the reins over the decision-making in this sort of context and we see the negative impact that has had on alternative parties in this House.

I have great confidence in the Premier's commitment in relation to this matter, because I have great confidence and stand by her integrity, having known her for more than 30 years as a person who is absolutely committed to the best possible standards of democratic performance and principles in this

state. She is someone who shares with me a great passion for and commitment to this institution of parliament in that the parliament should provide for all members all opportunities for their fullest contribution on the policy issues of the day. The support of the government for this reform, in order to ensure that crossbenchers are appropriately looked after with an independent decision-making process to deliver that, is a reform that I am very pleased to be supporting today.