



Speech By
Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 26 November 2020

MOTION

Sessional Orders

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (5.08 pm): I respectfully oppose the motion moved by the Leader of the House. I strongly oppose it because democracy is dead in Queensland. It continues to be dead and buried in Queensland. The Leader of the House said this is the people's house. This is no longer the people's house; this is Labor's house. This is Labor's political plaything. I see the Minister for Education interjecting with her hands over her ears. This is going to be a long four years and I look forward to it.

I am glad that the government has kept the Business Committee, because with the Business Committee comes the business program motion moved every Tuesday.

Mr WALKER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Is this a lecture? He is not going through the chair.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! What is the point of order, member for Mundingburra?

Mr WALKER: It is on relevance. He is not going through the chair.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: Whoever my honourable colleague is, perhaps some more experienced people ought to have a little chat with the member later—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Manager of Opposition Business, we do not need your commentary on my ruling.

Mr BLEIJIE: I thank the member because he has given me a good target to turn my attention to. Once honourable colleagues remind me who he is and which seat he represents, I will be able to frame him a little.

I shall tell the House about these sessional orders. They are rubbish. What the Leader of the House did not tell honourable colleagues is that these amendments affect private members' motions, which are debated once a week. They are proposing to change the sessional and standing orders so that the government can move amendments to negative a private member's motion. Speaker Wellington established in the sessional orders a process so that if an opposition or crossbench member were to move a private member's motion the government cannot move to delete all words after 'the House notes', thus negating the motion and turning it into a pro-government motion. These amendments to standing and sessional orders change that. We will be going back to the bad old days when an opposition or crossbench member would move a motion and the government would basically negative that motion. Effectively, we will end up with a situation where no private member's motion will be debated in the sitting week because the government will negative each motion, making it a pro-government motion.

The Leader of the House says, 'This is democracy. This is the people's house. Let's debate things in a respectful way.' I recall what happened in the 56th Parliament, which the member for Mundingburra certainly was not in. In that parliament the Leader of the House stood up and said, 'I agree that things should happen differently in this House.' When she said that perhaps she thought that they were not going to return to the government benches. At that time she was all for having a conversation about amending the standing orders and the sessional orders to make debate and discussion in this House more productive. What has changed since she made that great speech about amending the sessional and standing orders to work with the opposition and crossbench? What has changed is that there has been an election, they won, they have a majority and they are back to form. They are back to using the parliament as their political plaything. That is what these sessional and standing orders are all about. As I have said before, whatever Labor wants Labor gets, as with these orders.

The Business Committee, which will continue, is a farce and has been for three years. I look forward to the debates with the Leader of the House every Tuesday morning when we debate the new business program motion. I refer to the point that the Leader of the House made before about the Business Committee. It was not that I was unhappy to attend. I did not mind attending and I did; it was just the company with which I had to attend. It was not the Leader of the House and it was not the Clerk, who was there as well. I saw the Clerk raise his eyebrows. It was not the Clerk or the Leader of the House; it was the other members of the committee I did not like participating or attending with. However, I will continue to play an active role in that committee.

I will also continue to strongly advocate for the people of Queensland so that they can have a say with this state Labor government. I will continue to advocate for that on the Business Committee and I know that the representatives of the crossbench members will also advocate that we should not use this parliament as a political plaything. Over the past three years or, in fact, the entire term of the Palaszczuk Labor government we have seen the continual destruction of democracy in this House with less debate on bills, more urgency motions moved, more guillotines and fewer bills going to committees.

For the benefit of honourable members, I will table a document comparing the sitting days of different parliaments in Australia between 2012 and 2020. We can see the number of days that the Queensland parliament has sat in each term of government since 2012. We have gone back a little further. Honourable members will be interested to know that this year the Labor government has broken a record that had not been broken since 1983 when the Bjelke-Petersen government sat for only 29 days. Labor sat for 28 days. They broke the record. In 2015 the parliament sat for 33 days. In 2016 they had a cracker year and sat for 43 days, but then it is downhill. In 2017 they sat for 34 days; they sat for 37 days in 2018; in 2019 they sat for 37 days; and in 2020 they sat for 28 days. We can compare that to the other jurisdictions that, I assume, were also dealing with coronavirus issues. They managed to maintain upwards of 46 days of sittings. The South Australian parliament sat for 52 days. I table a copy of that document.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, comparing sitting days of different Australian parliaments [261](#).

Clearly we see that the Labor government is riding roughshod over this place.

I have circulated amendments that I intend to move to amend the motion that the Leader of the House has moved. I will table a copy of those amendments. As I understand it, they are being circulated. I will move particular amendments that propose that a private member's motion is debated every day for half an hour, that is, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The government is going to move an amendment to allow it to negative a private member's motion. Essentially there will be no private members' motions because whatever we put in a motion they will negative and make it a pro-government motion. Through my amendments I propose that a private member's motion is moved every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and debated for half an hour.

My amendments also propose that family-friendly hours be no more. I propose that we sit till nine o'clock at night on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. I recognise that on Thursday nights some honourable members have to travel regionally, so I propose to maintain the 6.30 finish. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, parliament should sit until nine o'clock at night when the automatic adjournment would be moved. I move the following amendments—

In Sessional Order 1C, insert—

- (1) On Tuesday after 'Tabling of Reports', insert—
'Notice of motion for debate during Private Members' Motion (5.30pm—6.00pm) (Notice may be stated in the House and delivered to the Clerk)'
- (2) On Tuesday after 'Matters of Public Interest',
Omit—
'300pm—5.30pm—
Government Business

5.30pm—7.00pm—

Disallowance Motions (maximum of 1 hour debate), Private members' Bills or Government Business in accordance with Sessional Order 1(d))

7.00pm—7.30pm—

Automatic Adjournment'

And insert—

'300pm—5.00pm—

Government Business

5.00pm—5.30pm—

Private Members' Motion (motion for which was given prior to 10.15 am to take precedence)

5.30pm—9.00pm—

Disallowance Motions, Private members' Bills or Government Business in accordance with Sessional Order 1(d))

9.00pm—9.30pm—

Automatic Adjournment'

(3) On Wednesday omit—

'5.00pm—6.00pm—

Private Members' Motion (motion for which notice was given immediately prior to 10.15am to take precedence)

6.00pm—7.00pm

Government Business

7.00pm—7.30pm—

Automatic Adjournment'

And insert—

'5.00pm—5.30pm—

Private Members' Motion (motion for which notice was given immediately prior to 10.15am to take precedence)

5.30pm—9.00pm

Government Business

9.00pm—7.30pm—

Automatic Adjournment'

(4) On Thursday after 'Tabling of Reports', insert—

'Notice of motion for debate during Private Members' Motion (5.30pm—6.00pm) (Notice may be stated in the House and delivered to the Clerk)'

(5) On Thursday after 'Matters of Public Interest',

Omit—

'4.00pm—6.30pm—

Government Business'

And insert—

'4.00pm—5.30pm—

Government Business

5.00pm—5.30pm—

Private Members' Motion (motion for which was given prior to 10.15 am to take precedence)

I table a copy of the amendments.

Tabled paper: Amendments to Sessional Orders by the member for Kawana, Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP [262](#).

Over the next four years the only way that we will be able to fight this Labor government is by not giving in to Labor's bullying antics. They think that just because you speak in this parliament you are wasting Labor's time. We get that this place is an inconvenience for them. The honourable member can shake her head as long as she wants, but to the Labor Party this place has become an inconvenience. It is an inconvenience for members on the Labor side to be here, and that is a shame. They should be here.

The honourable Leader of the House says, 'We don't want to sit until two o'clock in the morning.' I get that. It is why I do not propose that we sit until two o'clock in the morning, even though great legislation has been debated and passed at that time. And guess what? A lot more legislation went through the House. We sat longer and we sat more days. Members in this House are paid to do their job in their constituencies and to represent their constituents here. I know that the honourable member for Coomera represents over 45,000 or 46,000 constituents in this place. He is paid to represent his

constituent issues here. If he is continually told that he is not allowed to speak and that the committee that he is on is not able to fulfil its duties by looking at legislation—such as we saw with the urgency motion moved today in relation to the pineapple mayor in Rockhampton—then we are curtailing debate and we are curtailing democracy. The Leader of the House said that this is the people's house, but this is not the people's house anymore; it is Labor's political plaything. They have done it for five years and, unfortunately, they will continue to do it for four more years.

Fortunately for the people of Queensland there are members on this side of the House, in opposition and on the crossbench, who will not take this lying down. We do not think this is at all acceptable in the House. We will fight for every Queensland constituent because they deserve a voice in this place. That is why they voted for members of parliament and that is what we are here to do.