



Speech By  
**Jarrold Bleijie**


**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 November 2020

**MOTION**

**Suspension of Standing Orders, Estimates Hearing**

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (6.33 pm): During the election the government did promise to hand down a budget before Christmas. What the government did not say is that it was going to rush the estimates process. Ordinarily when a budget is handed down there is a period of time, which is weeks, where the committees go away and undertake appropriate research on the budget. The committees ask appropriate questions on notice—in fact, around 380 questions on notice—to dig deep into the detail of the budget and find things from those answers to questions on notice that are not contained in the budget. That is what is being rushed. To be frank to the Leader of the House, I thank her for her advice, but whether or not I go on radio will not be because she says I should or should not. I will go on radio and call out a disgrace when I see it, and this is a disgrace.

If the Leader of the House wants people to believe that the budget will pass in the second week of the sittings of the estimates that is wrong, because the parliament has to come back and deal with the budget after the estimates process where committee reports are tabled and we have debates on the reports. The government can hand down a budget this year without having the estimates. New South Wales has handed down its budget and its estimates process is in February next year when the parliament resumes.

In the table that has been put forward by the Leader of the House the budget gets handed down on 1 December, which is next Tuesday. Questions to ministers for the budgetary process are required to be in two days later—one business day—on 3 December. On 7 December ministers are required to answer those questions—for the Economics and Governance Committee, by eight o'clock in the morning. Estimates starts at nine o'clock in the morning. The opposition is up to the job. We will do it. When the Leader of the House talks about the ministers being the ones having to front up to estimates and prepare, based on what I have seen of this government's appearances at estimates in the last five years I would say the ministers have not had to do much to prepare for the estimates. I suspect the public servants and the directors-general are doing all the work. I am advised that we still do not have proper administrative arrangements in departments. Ministerial staffers have not been appointed to ministers' offices. Some departments do not even know what is in their budget or what they are doing on Tuesday next week when it gets handed down. These officials will be required some few days later to turn up to estimates and appear to have all the knowledge.

The people who are not being served properly by a proper estimates process are the people of Queensland. They will not have the time to appropriately delve into the issues. We know that, when questions on notice are asked—and there are over 300 questions on notice that the committees put forward to the ministers—and the detail that is not contained within the budget is delved into, that is the basis of many of the issues that come before and out of estimates. That will not happen appropriately considering committees will have one day to get questions on notice in, considering the budget gets handed down on 1 December, questions on notice have to be put in by 3 December and then the ministers will respond one hour before estimates start at nine o'clock on 7 December.

When I was on ABC Radio with Steve Austin, as the Leader of the House referred to, I was explaining to Steve that usually with an estimates process you have a period of time in which the committees will undertake appropriate research. The government says this is the most important budget in a generation and it is rushing it before Christmas. They are rushing the estimates process. They are rushing it before Christmas so that they can get it all out of the way while the Christmas trees are being put up around Queensland. They can get all the bad news out of the way before Christmas and then come back next year and start fresh without the integrity and accountability of the estimates process. Is it any wonder when we have just had a debate where those opposite rode roughshod over members in this place?

The Leader of the House talks about the estimates process in the former LNP government. We required ministers to attend two full days of inquiry. The ministers in the LNP government sat at the estimates table for two full days and were grilled on the budget. In this estimates process we have the Premier being grilled for 1.5 hours.

For two full days, LNP ministers sat before the estimates committees. These ministers will barely give the committees an hour and a half. The Premier of the state, who describes the budget as the most important budget in a generation, is giving us—how honourable of her—1.5 hours of her time after the budget is handed down. That is how seriously the Labor Premier treats the budget.

**Mr Nicholls:** She went on holidays after her first time one.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I recall; I take the interjection from the member for Clayfield. The Premier handed down her first budget and on the second day of the budget estimates hearings the jet flew and she was away.

**Mr Nicholls:** She can't do it this time though.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The borders are open and the jet will be up in the air. The Treasurer is giving less than four hours. This is the most important budget in a generation and the Treasurer is giving less than four hours to the estimates process. I will go on radio and media and call out the disgrace that the Labor government is making of this parliament and the continual betrayal of the public of Queensland in terms of rushing bills through without appropriate scrutiny.

This afternoon I had a pleasant meeting with the Leader of the House at which I was briefed on the sessional and standing orders. I inquired about the estimates process, but it had not been finalised. I suspect that we are delayed here now because this is hot off the printer with what they have worked out with questions on notice and so forth. This is no way to run a government. The Leader of the House says, 'We made an election commitment when we said we would hand down a budget.' Every indication points to a government that has not clearly thought through the process for the budget or the estimates process.

There is no reason why the estimates cannot happen later, even if the budget is handed down this year. They have made an election commitment and they can tick the box for that election commitment, after which the estimates process takes its natural course. In this parliament they are continually changing the goalposts to suit their own agenda, which is based on their arrogance.

**Mr Bailey** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** In the past five years their hubris has built up, particularly in the squawking minister who is interjecting now, the Minister for Main Roads. He would be one of the worst offenders for arrogance and hubris that I have ever seen in this parliament.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Miller will put his comments through the chair.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The public of Queensland ought to know about this. We will not sit in silence as the Leader of the House moves motions, saying that it is for the benefit of democracy and that everyone will have their say. We know that the departments are in a complete chaotic mess. We know that they are having to appoint a former vote-rigging rorter, Mike Kaiser, to fill an acting role because they do not have the people in those positions—

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Manager of Opposition Business has strayed from the motion before us. I ask that he be relevant and brought back to the motion.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will allow it. You will come back to the motion, member.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I suspect that Director-General Kaiser will be sitting at the estimates table. If he is not I ask that the government let us know. I think it is pretty important that the director-general is part of the estimates process.

This is a sham. It is a disgrace. They are rushing it through before Christmas when people are preoccupied with Christmas activities and with finalising 2020. It should not happen. Estimates should take place at an appropriate time in the new year.

*(Time expired)*