




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Record of Proceedings, 22 April 2020

ACTING SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Coronavirus, Procedures in Chamber

 **Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I would like to start today by thanking, on behalf of Mr Speaker, the Committee of the Legislative Assembly and leadership on both sides of the House for agreeing to matters such as pairing, quorum and voting to allow the Assembly to operate and also comply with social distancing rules.

Yesterday Mr Speaker circulated to all members a special colour-coded seating plan approved in accordance with standing order 244(1). The colour shaded seats are the only seats which will be able to be occupied by members and are not allocated to any particular members. There are special seats allocated for 'the next speaker' which is similar to the system which has operated at regional sittings whereby members who are entering the chamber to speak will go to and speak from those seats unless they are from the ministry or shadow ministry and are occupying one of the other shaded seats. There are also seats set aside for the crossbench when voting in a 'party vote'. Adherence to Mr Speaker's seating plan and capping the number of members in the chamber to no more than 20 at any one time is essential to observe social distancing requirements.

I note that two parliamentary attendants are sitting at the rear of the chamber. These attendants will provide lecterns and will be sterilising the speaking spots between each new speaker. Another attendant is focusing on supplying items from the printer for members. However, I would ask all members to work with parliamentary staff to reduce the amount of paper circulating. The Clerk or their delegate will distribute documents, including tabled papers and amendments to bills and notices of motion, to members by email. I would ask members seeking to table documents or give notice of amendments, notices of motions and lodging any questions to provide the documents to the clerks-at-the-table via the email tableoffice@parliament.qld.gov.au. I would ask for any ministerial statements or members' speech notes to be provided to Hansard via the email Hansard@parliament.qld.gov.au.

I note that bottled water will be supplied to members in the House, not jugs and glasses, to reduce the risks to staff in handling glassware. I will also allow members to bring their own containers of water into the chamber if they so desire.

Given the large number of pairs and absences in the last sitting period and today, I have asked the Leader of the House to consider moving for the temporary suspension of standing order 263A until the COVID-19 outbreak passes and things return to normal. I also believe it is important that the extensive number of pairs that have been agreed to be entered into the record at some point.

In terms of the roll today, we will once again rely heavily on the whips to give the attendance of party members to attendants, and crossbench members should also report their attendance to the attendants. Lastly, can I urge all members to ensure that they abide by social distancing and limits on numbers in the remainder of the precinct including the cafe, coffee shop, elevators et cetera.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I want to raise an issue in the House already. The member for Whitsunday has now sat in three separate seats. The Speaker has made it clear which seats are allocated to the crossbench. The member for Whitsunday has been in three seats—none of which have been pursuant to the Speaker's statement.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you for your point of order. I will take some advice. This is very new to all of us and it is taking a while for us to learn these new procedures. I would remind the member for Whitsunday that there are allocated seats for the crossbench. At this point we can have no more than 20 members in the chamber, as ruled by the Speaker. You are fine to stay for the present time, but I would ask that you familiarise yourself with those proceedings and adhere to those numbers as set by the Speaker.