




Speech By
Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

Record of Proceedings, 18 March 2020

MOTION

Amendments to Sessional Orders

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (9.56 pm): I think it is quite extraordinary that we have the opposition in this House creating a bogeyman out of a very sensible and reasonable amendment to our sessional orders, creating a bogeyman as the great spooky spectre that is waving over the state at this time when the reality is that COVID-19 is the spectre that is hanging over this state and this jurisdiction at this time. The very sensible and prudent amendment that is before the House—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I want to make it clear as, from some of the interjections of members opposite, I think they do not understand what it actually means. I want to make it clear—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my left. The member for Nicklin will cease his interjections.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: What the amendment moved by the Leader of the House provides for, sensibly with a sunset clause sitting over the top of it, is a different set of arrangements for the way in which this House can have its normal sitting program amended. In the circumstances that we currently face as a community, indeed as a country and as a world, it is entirely prudent to have this set of arrangements. Even though this is a set of arrangements which has proposed in the amendment moved by the Leader of the House a sunset clause sitting over the top of it, these are the arrangements by which the Speaker can change the program going forward. These are the arrangements that sit in place in a range of jurisdictions in this country. This is the set of arrangements that sits in place permanently for the House of Representatives, permanently for the Senate, permanently for the South Australian House of Assembly, permanently for the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, permanently for the Western Australian Legislative Council, permanently for the Western Australian Legislative Assembly and permanently for the Victorian Legislative Council.

What we are seeking to put in place is a fallback position where we would see the House not sit on its next scheduled date in the program. That needs to be put in place because circumstances may arise where that needs to happen. There seems to be some misapprehension that the government cannot do that now. It can do that at any time it wishes by proroguing the House. Proroguing the House would mean that all the work of the committees would be swept away. The work on all the bills before the House—the ones that I have heard members cite as being important things to be dealt with—would get swept away.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: So you are saying that you want to see that happen? That is what would happen. I have now heard from the opposition in this place that if we are in the extraordinary circumstances where the sitting program as planned has to be amended their prescription is to wipe away all of the

work of this parliament so far and to take everything off the agenda going forward. This is sensible and prudent protection against the wasted effort and diminution of what is on the *Notice Paper* and the committees of this House. This is the right and proper way to deal with this situation. It is a sensible and prudent way forward.

Mr Speaker, you started the sitting week with reference to the events in this chamber 98 years ago as the spectre of the Spanish flu continued to reverberate and impact the globe and reverberate and impact this great state. What we saw 98 years ago was a lack of bipartisanship which resulted in the inability of the House to deal sensibly and prudently with a pandemic.

I am so sad to say that this sensible and prudent amendment to the sessional orders, which has a sunset clause, is being opposed by the opposition in this House. What we are seeing as a consequence—

Mr Krause interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Scenic Rim is warned under the standing orders. I will hear all contributions in silence soon, members. Just because there are fewer members in the chamber it does not mean that the behaviour at the moment is acceptable.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: What we are seeing is that the Neanderthal tendencies of the conservatives in this state have not progressed in 98 years.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Please resume your seat, Minister. The member for Southport will cease his interjections. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will cease his interjections. I will ask for silence shortly if you cannot cease your interjections. Any member who wishes to speak can seek the call.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: The sensible and prudent amendment to the sessional orders, with a sunset clause, proposed by the Leader of the House is being opposed in this House in an echo down the halls of this parliament from 98 years ago when a member had to be brought into the House on a stretcher in a delirious state in order to try to make sure that this state could function in the face of a perilous, terrible pandemic. It is absolutely extraordinary that these people have learnt nothing.

This is a sensible and prudent set of arrangements that do not even go as far as the arrangements that permanently exist in the other jurisdictions in Australia that I named.

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Gregory is warned under the standing orders.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Those jurisdictions are the House of Representatives, the Australian Senate, the South Australian House of Assembly, the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, the Western Australian Legislative Council, the Western Australian Legislative Assembly and the Victorian Legislative Council. This is nothing extraordinary and radical. What is extraordinary and quite radical is the creation of this bogeyman by those opposite when the real threat to our state is COVID-19.

I implore those opposite to reconsider and rethink their attitude. I know that the sensible and moderate people on this side of the chamber will support the amendment being proposed by the Leader of the House in order to make sure we see good, sensible management of this House in the face of an extraordinary global pandemic. I support the Leader of the House. I support her amendment as proposed to the House. I hope all members of the House will see sense and do the same.