



Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 14 July 2020

MOTION

Business Program



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.16 am): I move—

1. That the following government business will be considered this sitting week, with the nominated maximum periods of time as specified:
 - (a) the Transport and Other Legislation (Road Safety, Technology and Other Matters) Amendment Bill and the Transport Legislation (Disability Parking and Other Matters) Amendment Bill, a maximum of 2.5 hours to complete all stages;
 - (b) the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, a maximum of 3.5 hours to complete all stages;
 - (c) the Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, a maximum of 3.5 hours to complete all stages;
 - (d) the Ministerial and Other Office Holder Staff and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, a maximum of one hour to complete all stages.
2. The following time limits for the bills listed in 1. apply:
 - (a) consideration in detail to be completed by three minutes before the expiry of the maximum hours;
 - (b) question on third reading to be put by two minutes before the expiry of the maximum hours;
 - (c) question on long title to be put by one minute before the expiry of the maximum hours.
3. If the nominated stage of each bill has not been completed by the allocated time specified in 2., or by 5.55 pm on Thursday, 16 July 2020, Mr Speaker:
 - (a) shall call on a minister to table any explanatory notes to their circulated amendments, any statement of compatibility with human rights or any statement relating to an override declaration;
 - (b) shall put all remaining questions necessary to either pass that stage or pass the bill without further debate;
 - (c) may interrupt non-specified business or debate on a bill or motion to complete the requirements of the motion;
 - (d) will complete all stages required by this motion notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders.

I thank the members of the Business Committee for their attendance at the meeting last night. I do not think I would be verballing the Manager of Opposition Business in saying that there will be strong opposition to this motion. That was expressed at the meeting last night and certainly has continued to be expressed for the entire time the business program has been in place. Although those opposite are critical about this system, the fact is that the figures show time and again that more bills are debated, more members are speaking and more time is being spent speaking on bills. This is a positive thing for all Queenslanders.

We know that there is much business to be done in this House and that, due to COVID and the restrictions that had to be put in place for a period of time, this House was not able to deal with general government business while we dealt with urgent COVID legislation. We now have important bills that we seek to finalise. There are nine sitting days between now and the election. We want to make sure that these important pieces of legislation are debated by members in this House. That is why this week

we will be debating the Transport and Other Legislation (Road Safety, Technology and Other Matters) Amendment Bill as well as the Transport Legislation (Disability Parking and Other Matters) Amendment Bill, which earlier I moved a motion to cognate. We also will be debating the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, the Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Ministerial and Other Office Holder Staff and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

Despite the comments made by the Manager of Opposition Business in the Business Committee meeting last night, I hope that in the last two sitting weeks we can come together and genuinely have a discussion about how these matters are progressed. I have said this before and I will say it again: we should not need to allocate set time for any of these bills. The way that the business program operates in Victoria—it has successfully operated for more than a decade—is that the bills are listed and whatever is not completed by the end of the sitting week is put. They do not have a situation where they spend the entire week on one bill and the remainder of the bills have to be put en bloc. They actually regulate and manage themselves. Members put their names down to speak to the bills they are genuinely interested in debating. That is the way this House used to operate. You would see a short list of speakers on a purely technical, simple bill and for more complex bills a lot more members would put their names down to speak. That is not the case anymore.

What we see are very long lists of every single member in the opposition putting their names down on the list. We have also seen the habit of those opposite circulating the committee report and just verbatim reading out of the committee report because they have nothing else to say to the bill because they actually have not read it, but they have been told to stand up and speak to these bills because they are trying to prove a point. But what is the point? That they know how to waste time? Yes, members have the right to speak, but it has never been the case that everyone has the right to speak on absolutely everything for as long as they want.

There are rules and standing orders in place in this parliament, like every other parliament. When it comes to our actual sitting hours, we were one of the last jurisdictions in the country to have fixed sitting times. The general public thought it was absurd that we were still debating important legislation at three o'clock in the morning and it believes the hours are sensible and that we can debate these bills within those time frames if we work cooperatively together. On that basis, I would welcome the support of the opposition for this motion today. I look forward to hearing the Leader of the Opposition's contribution.