




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

Record of Proceedings, 1 December 2021

MOTION

Dissent from Speaker's Ruling

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (6.36 pm): I rise to oppose this motion moved by the member for South Brisbane and supported by the member for Maiwar and I support the Speaker's ruling. Two weeks ago when the initial ruling was made it did not surprise me to see that because I know the gap between what the Greens party promise and their inability to deliver it. I must say I was amused by their incompetence and I am amazed that they have come back in to highlight their incompetence a second time. That is what is going on here today. They are coming back to their inability and their lack of knowledge about democratic Westminster process and convention.

This is not a motion; this is a tantrum—a tantrum by two Greens party MPs who promise what they cannot deliver and in one case, after four years in this chamber, still does not understand basic tenets of the Westminster democratic system and parliamentary procedure. It is embarrassing that we are having this debate at all.

This is a very serious motion, as the Leader of the House has outlined. This is the kind of motion that would potentially be moved when there is a government or a situation in absolute peril, and that is clearly not the case in this state. This is a pathetic attempt at a social media post or campaign to characterise the major parties as somehow being similar, which is ridiculous. It is embarrassing that we are even having this debate.

Mr BERKMAN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I struggle to see how a social media post is in any way relevant to the procedural motion that we are debating presently.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members. The House will come to order. Minister, you are straying somewhat, but you have also been relevant at times to the procedural motion. I just caution you to ensure that you are remaining true to the motion. Member for Maiwar, I appreciate your points of order, but I do not need continual points of order being raised. I am in control of this debate and I will continue to rule.

Mr BAILEY: Thank you, I respect your guidance, Mr Speaker. We have heard the member for South Brisbane come in here today talking about the unfairness that her bill was ruled out of order. It is the fault of no-one here other than the Greens party that they do not understand how this parliament works. The rules of this place are informed by many sources including standing orders, the Constitution and convention, whether the member likes it or not. That has been long established for decades and centuries.

For the Greens to come in here and suggest that they know better than a democratic system that has been going for a century and a half is the height of arrogance and elitism. That is what it is and it has to be called out for what it is. Parliamentary convention plays a fundamental role in parliamentary

practice and it has been developed over many years. Those conventions have long been upheld by many Speakers and many governments of all persuasions. That is how important they are and that is why this institution has prevailed for so long, and that should come as no surprise to the Greens party which is once again trying to throw that out the window all for the sake of a political point that they are going to be making. It is what we have come to expect from both of those members. They talk a big talk out there, but once they come into this place it is all about the vibe and not about the method or the strategy.

I point out to the members for Maiwar and South Brisbane that the Speaker's ruling and this debate are not dealing with the merits of the bill—it is a procedural debate—but what we are dealing with here is whether or not this House wishes to deviate from the longstanding Westminster parliamentary principle that money bills be introduced by the government. This is a basic tenet of parliamentary democracy and it deserves to be upheld and supported. Imagine what would happen if the member for Toowoomba South or the member for Kawana came in here tomorrow and said, 'Let's do an LNP budget and here's our cuts, sacking and selling.' It would be opposed by every other party in this place, I can guarantee it.

Let us look at the principle of this, and it is a bizarre dissent motion. We have elections for reasons and last year the people of Queensland put their faith in this Premier and this government. We submitted ourselves to the Governor who commissioned us as the government. They did not put their faith in the Greens party as a government. In fact, it has to be stated that the Katter party has greater political clout in this House than the Greens party and yet here we have the Greens party moving a dissent motion, which should ordinarily be an incredibly important motion, for frivolous reasons. Queenslanders put their faith in this government as a strong and progressive government and it is only the Labor party in this state that achieves progressive change, whether that is decriminalising abortion, banning tree clearing despite amendments moved by the member for Maiwar to water it down, legislating for voluntary assisted dying and many other social reforms.

Parliamentary convention, rules and democratic processes are to be respected if we want the longevity of this institution and this method of government to prevail in the long term. This is a parliament, not a student union. For the Greens party to come in here on false pretences with policies that they have no strategy to deliver and blame long established Westminster democratic convention and rules is the height of arrogance and elitism. It is undemocratic to be blaming democracy for their failure to deliver on their promises. Let me just say this: the Speaker is in his second term in the chair and is, I think, widely respected and one of the most respected Speakers that I have seen in this place. He is there for a second term for good reason. I think he has a very strong reputation as being impartial and fair in this chamber. That cannot be said of all Speakers, I might say. I am not going to name names here, but that cannot be said of all Speakers. However, this Speaker has the respect of this House and I respect his decision in this regard because it is consistent with what a Speaker who supports the Westminster democratic system would do.

Let me make a couple of closing points. Firstly, I have never met the gentlemen who have provided some advice to the Greens MPs, but in the cases of Mr Alan Wilson and Gerard Carney the advice has been given in haste. They say so themselves. We do not know what question was posed or what information was supplied to them. They say themselves that the opinion is pro bono and does not engage with nor consider events and circumstances which led to the ruling. That is an extraordinary caveat that the advice does not canvass constitutional convention and standing order 22. We are seeing some advice that is partial at best—and I make no reflections on the gentlemen informed—but they say so themselves in their advice.

In the case of Mr Orr, his advice does not detail the full convention of the financial imperative of the Crown—a basic tenet of Westminster democracy—detailed in the Speaker's ruling and spelt out in Erskine May and *House of Representatives Practice*. Professor Orr refers to statute and standing orders but seems to neglect direct mention of the other sources of parliamentary law, a surprising omission from someone who says they are an expert in parliamentary law. We have some partial advice from some Greens party MPs who have no way of achieving what they put out there in the community—none whatsoever. They have no strategy and no policy. Moving a motion against 150-plus years of parliamentary convention is just an embarrassment. It is an embarrassment. This is a party that is vacuous, they make big promises and they have no way of delivering them as opposed to this government—this progressive Labor government—which gets things done, which knows how to achieve our policies, which makes sure that we deliver our policies as a government and when we go to an election we outline exactly how we have achieved them as we promised at the last election.

It is pretty straightforward and that is what integrity in government is all about. It is not about having utopian promises out there with no way of delivering them and then blaming the parliament and blaming the Speaker and blaming other people. That is childish. That is a tantrum. That is not a strategy—

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I will ask you to make sure that you are coming back to the procedural elements of it.

Mr BAILEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The fact that we are having this dissent motion at all is a reflection on the vacuousness of the Greens MPs here today. I have a printout here which I will not table—I do not want to overburden our staff for something that is readily available—from the Queensland parliamentary website where you can find a very simple fact sheet relating to the legislative process and the making of an act. It shows the basics of parliamentary democracy. It is something that high school students do wonderful assignments on because they understand the Westminster system better than the members for Maiwar and South Brisbane who are pulling a stunt here today, and it is to the detriment of our democracy that they do so. It is undemocratic, it is elitist, it is ignorant—wilfully and deliberately ignorant—of parliamentary procedure and it ought to be voted down.