




Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 22 June 2022

MOTION

Business Program

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.21 am): Whilst members of the opposition are very supportive of the usual conventions around a budget sitting week and the debate on the Appropriation Bill, it will disappoint the Leader of the House to hear that we will be opposing this motion based on two aspects of the motion she just moved. The first one I want to speak to relates to the motion that will be put forward by the Leader of the House in relation to the 2022 estimates proceedings. Yes, when that debate comes it will be entertaining and it will be informative, but it will be the only opportunity we on this side of the House get to address aspects to do with those committees—such as the length of time the committees will actually sit and what allocation of time will be afforded to each minister who appears before the committees.

Over the last six years, we have heard issues around protection—not only in terms of the allocation of time given to the ministers but in terms of protection given by the chairs of the committees. Those concerns have not just come from members of the opposition; members of the media and the broader community have raised concerns around the operation of the committee process in respect of the appropriation bills in this House. Many very informed practitioners of parliamentary process have also raised concerns about how those committee hearings are undertaken. The structure of those committee hearings—the allocation of time, the ministers who will appear, who else will appear, the types of questions that can be asked and the government interference within those processes—will literally be debated in that 30 minutes and that will be the only time this House will have to debate that. Thirty minutes is simply not long enough for those on this side, and I suspect the crossbenches as well, to challenge those allocations within those committee hearings.

The other aspect I want to address is the guillotining of the consideration in detail debate of the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill. I heard the Leader of the House mention that she went back and looked at historic practice around this. I would like to go back to my first budget in 2009. The bills that were debated alongside the Appropriation Bill then had to do with asset sales. I recall after a very long sitting week—where we sat well into the early hours of Friday morning and we then continued into Friday night and Saturday morning—we debated at length consideration in detail around the sale of Queensland's government owned corporations such as Queensland Rail, Forestry, Ports. Who sold them? The Labor government did, when the Premier was a minister, when the Treasurer was a minister and when the Speaker himself was a minister. That is when those assets were sold.

We were quite happy to stay here as long as it took to ensure that Queenslanders had input into that consideration in detail. In fact we sat until four o'clock on that Saturday morning. We would have sat longer but for the practice that is also occurring now. Back then it was the members for Rockhampton and Sunnybank—ministers Schwarten and Spence—who came in here at 4 am and literally guillotined that debate.

We on this side of the House are very happy to stay as long as it takes to debate in this instance a bill that has come as a surprise to all of Queensland—not just businesses, not just mining companies, not just that one per cent that the government keeps referring to. Mind you, it is that one per cent that

employs nearly 50 per cent of all private sector employees in this state, it is that one per cent that often sells our groceries or our electricity and, as was asked during question time, it is that one per cent that potentially will see greater cost-of-living expenses imposed on all Queenslanders. It is those kinds of things that we in the opposition and I suspect the crossbench as well want to unpack during consideration in detail on the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill. We are quite happy to repeat 2009. We are quite happy to sit very late on Thursday night to ensure that every member of this House gets their opportunity and gets their 15 minutes—

Mr Watts: Democracy is served.

Mr POWELL: I take that interjection from the member for Toowoomba South—so that democracy is served and everyone gets their 15 minutes on the Appropriation Bill. When that is concluded and those bills are sent off to the estimates hearings, we should then debate in detail the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill. That does not need to be guillotined. That is not a long bill. The clauses can be unpacked during consideration in detail. Indeed, the LNP will be unpacking and challenging aspects of those. We do not want that part of this debate to be guillotined, and therefore we will be opposing this motion.