



Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**


**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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Record of Proceedings, 8 November 2022

## MOTION

### Business Program

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.18 am): It will come as no surprise to the Leader of the House that the LNP opposition will not be supporting this motion. Given it has been some time since we have recapped why we are in this position, it is probably worthwhile having another look at it. We have a government bereft of any plan—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr POWELL:** Carrying around a document does not mean you have a plan. Since this government came to power we have seen the number of sitting days and the number of sitting hours reduced year on year. Do not take my word for it. A recent parliamentary research brief showed that in the lower houses of all Australian parliaments, for those that have a bicameral system, the federal government sat for 67 days; the Western Australian and South Australian governments sat for 52 days; Victoria, which the Leader of the House wants us to mirror, sat for 48 days; New South Wales sat for 42 days; Queensland then comes in next at 40, just above Tasmania and the ACT at 36 and 33 respectively.

In a state the size of Queensland, with a population the size of Queensland's and with the complexity of issues that Queensland faces, surely we can meet for more time and more often than the ACT and Tasmania? We are seeing this government display an unwillingness to sit in this chamber. We have less days and we have less hours. Sure, we are starting to mature and, with the passing of the Queen, we did need to postpone and reschedule a sitting week. That has necessitated what I would consider to be some improvements. We are now sitting late on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, which allows more members of parliament the opportunity to speak. This is not about managing who speaks on which bills; it is about ensuring that every democratically elected member of parliament in this chamber has the democratic right to speak on whichever legislation they wish. We are also sitting on Fridays, which again has allowed more members of parliament to speak. We are nearly there. I acknowledge that, in the last sitting, out of three debates only one or maybe two were guillotined. Why? Because by sitting later, by sitting longer and by sitting more often, every member of parliament has an opportunity to have their say on the legislation they want to speak to.

What are we lacking? What is the one thing that could improve things? We could sit later on the Friday as well. If we did that then I am sure we would not need to guillotine any debate this week. We could have members speaking on the building bill, which is first up, and then we could go to the coalmining legislation and, ultimately, the cognate debate—as they have chosen to do—on the appropriations and the betting tax bill. All the speakers who want to speak to those bills could do so.

When we debated the changes to the sessional orders and pulling up stumps on Friday, I made the comment that I thought it might have been because the Premier had a red carpet event to attend. I commented that somewhere around the state of Queensland there was a red carpet that the Premier

needed to be on on the Friday. As the member for Kawana put it, were the sessional orders changed for Friday to reflect the travel arrangements of the Leader of the House? No-one is going to say that a member of this House does not have—

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. One, it is not relevant to this motion and, two, I take personal offence and the member should—resign, actually—withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): The member has taken personal offence. I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr POWELL:** I withdraw. No-one suggests that any member of parliament does not deserve a holiday. All members of parliament work very hard.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. My point of order is on relevance. This is not relevant to the motion.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Members will stop quarrelling across the chamber. Member, I will ask you to come back to the substance of this motion. The matters that you are raising relate to another motion. This motion is about the business of the House for this week.

**Mr POWELL:** As I was saying, we would be able to address the business of this week were we to sit longer. We would be able to address the *Notice Paper* and the legislation that sits on that *Notice Paper* were we to sit longer. We have said from day one that we are happy to sit late each night and we are happy to sit late on Fridays. We are happy to sit here as long as is necessary to ensure that every member of parliament has the opportunity to speak. I echo the question: if the government has changed sessional orders to accommodate a holiday rather than ensuring that we can get through the legislation that—

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I have already taken personal offence to that comment and it has already been withdrawn. The member has deliberately restated it. He should withdraw.

**Mr POWELL:** I withdraw, Mr Deputy Speaker. Again, we are almost there. If this parliament sat later and longer and if it sat for more days then these business program motions would not be necessary. If we are to be mature like Victoria, as the Leader of the House has said, we need to start sitting as long as the Victorian parliament does.